Women's Political Empowerment at National and Local Levels through Quotas: A Case Study of Pakistan and Bangladesh

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Abstract

The introduction of gender quotas has been increasingly viewed as an important policy measure for promoting women's access to decision-making bodies and power structures at national and local levels around the globe, especially after the Beijing Platform for Action 1995. This thesis examines the introduction and implementation of political quotas for women in Pakistan and Bangladesh where women have been subjected to various forms of socio-economic and political discrimination. This thesis traces the processes leading to the introduction of political quotas, examines the roles of various governmental and non-governmental actors towards the adoption and implementation of quota policies, and finally evaluates the intensity of women's empowerment in both countries as a result of quota measures.

Academic work on gender quotas and women's empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh has been scattered both in time and focus of concern. The thesis assembles this disparate research to provide a holistic account and analysis of the introduction, implementation and impact of gender quotas in politics in Pakistan and Bangladesh. This facilitates understanding of the overall processes associated with gender mainstreaming through quotas located in the social, cultural economical and political contexts of both countries. This research looks at women's political empowerment through quotas at both national and local levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Comparison is made between Pakistan and Bangladesh to identify similarities and differences in their experiences with political gender quotas. The research assists in identifying key factors that explain how a policy works or does not; how it can be interpreted; and how it can be enacted and implemented in different ways by different actors. By adopting a historical

institutionalist perspective, the countries' adoption of gender quotas is given a temporal dimension, an essential requirement for understanding the present situation and how it has been reached.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADAB	Association of Development Agencies of Bangladesh
ADF	The African Development Forum
AF	*Aurat Foundation* (Pakistan)
AL	*Awami League* (Bangladesh)
ASF	Acid Survivors Foundation (Bangladesh)
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDHS	Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
BDT	Bangladeshi Takka
BMP	*Bangladesh Mahila Parishad*
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
BRAC	Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee
CCHR,B	Coordinating Council of Human Rights, Bangladesh
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DGHS	Directorate General of Health Services (Bangladesh)
DTCE	Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment
ECLAC	(UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean

FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women
GAD	Gender and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gender Inequality Index
GNI	Goss National Income
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HBF	Heinrich Boll Foundation
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMS	International Media Support
JI	*Jamat-i-Islami* (Islamic Party Pakistan)
JIB	*Jamat-i-Islami* (Bangladesh)
JP	*Jatiya Party* (Bangladesh)
JPGMC	Jinnah Post Graduate Medical Centre (Pakistan)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoWD	Ministry of Women Development (Pakistan)
MNA	Member of National Assembly
MPA	Member of Provincial Assembly
MP	Majority Plurality (Electoral System)
MP	Member of Parliament
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women (Pakistan)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

NSC	National Standing Committee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCC	One Stop Crisis Centre (Bangladesh)
PDO	Pattan Development Organisation (Pakistan)
PKR	Pakistani Rupees
PM	Prime Minister
PML	Pakistan Muslim League
PML(N)	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PML(Q)	Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-i-Azam)
PPP	Pakistan Peoples Party
PR	Proportional Representation (Electoral System)
Rs	Rupees (Pakistani Currency)
SIGI	Social Institution and Gender Index
Tk	Takka (Bangladeshi Currency)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WAD	Women and Development
WAF	Women's Action Forum (Pakistan)
WB	World Bank

WC	Working Committee
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Program
WID	Women in Development

1. Introduction

Background of the Study

Women constitute half of the world's population but they have been socially, culturally, economically and politically discriminated against around the globe (WEF Website). According to the UNIFEM (2006), 1.4 billion people are living in absolute poverty around the globe, out of which 70% are women. This involves denial of rights, discrimination and deprivation of opportunities. The UN (2001) reported that women account for 66% of the world's working hours which are mostly unpaid. Their work includes cooking, cleaning, washing, household chores, raising children, fetching water, caring for old family members and looking after cattle. Women earn only 10% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's property (UN 2001). This is because the social norms and traditions, especially in developing countries, do not allow women to hold or inherit property. UNDESA (2004) indicates that about 15% of all pregnant women have to face life-threatening situations around the world due to lack of proper medical care. But in general, gender inequalities are themselves unequally distributed. For example, African women are 200 times more vulnerable to death due to pregnancy complications than European women (UNDESA 2004). Some South Asian countries are notorious for incidents of bride burning and honour killings (ADB 2003). Domestic violence is a common phenomenon even in most advanced countries of the world. The World Bank says 'Violence rivals cancer as a

cause of mortality for women of child bearing age' (IDRC Website). This deprivation used to be mainly because of the lack of recognition of women as active members of societies for political, economic and social advancement. In some parts of Africa, there is a common saying that 'a woman is the child of her father, her husband and her son', meaning women, in every aspect of life are totally dependent on men (WB 2004; ADF 2008). The situation is alarming, and has been known about for more than three decades. However, political and social changes across the world have entailed greater attention being paid to addressing gender inequalities by eliminating discrimination against women.

Starting with women in development (WID) and women and development (WAD) programs of the 1970s and 1980s respectively, the approach to women and inequality in developing countries has evolved into gender and development (GAD) and gender mainstreaming (Moser & Moser 2005). WID approaches were a response to the realisation that early development efforts were gender blind and hence male oriented. Third world women were often portrayed as poor, illiterate, and ignorant. Their unequal economic and social status, low literacy levels, poor health, high maternal mortality and disadvantages under the law stemmed from their lack of participation in development (Woodford 2004). Thus, the WID approach advocated incorporating women into development projects, particularly into those that would provide them with economic independence and enhanced standing in their families and communities (Woodford 2004). This was vigorously supported by many academics and feminists, and major bilateral and multilateral donors added women's programs to their portfolios and promoted development policies that called for the inclusion of women (Daly 2005).

The United Nations also endorsed WID activities by announcing a 'decade for women' from 1975-1985 during the first world conference on women in 1975 in Mexico (Banerjee & Oquist

2000). The international community considered the conditions and processes that created gender inequality and rendered women across the globe into second class citizens. The ensuing Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) presented to the United Nations in 1979 and enforced in 1981 was the first formal instrument applied by the UN to achieve gender equality (Banerjee & Oquist 2000). In 1984, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was established as a separate entity in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the aim of promoting equality of men and women around the world. While women made gains in health, in literacy and in income-earning, much was left undone. It became clear that simply adding women to development was a flawed approach and WID and WAD were replaced by gender and development GAD (Moser 2005).

GAD emphasises the limitations of focusing on women only and stresses the necessity of realising that women's lives are grounded in social relations with men that set parameters for their actions, beliefs, and outlooks (Prugl & Lusgarten 2006). The GAD approach recognised that the roles of both men and women are important in the social, economic and political advancement of societies, but women experience more disadvantages than men. There are innumerable barriers towards the progression of women in the social, economic and political fields. GAD emphasised the removal of these barriers to include women in mainstream societal activities (Moser 2005). This notion of gender mainstreaming originated in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) which strengthened the concept of women's participation in all major societal activities. It further declared women's empowerment as the most important factor to achieve the goals of peace, development and equality. All member states were mandated to apply gender perspectives to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of all religious,

social, political, economic and legal policies. Thus gender was removed from being a supplement to development and placed as central to the practice of development (Carlos & Zahidi 2006). Thus GAD, through gender mainstreaming, seeks to institutionalise equality by incorporating gender-sensitive practices and norms to the processes, structures and environment of public policy. Gender mainstreaming institutionalised the concept of women's empowerment as a leading policy for development (Goetz 2003).

Women's empowerment refers to the equitable representation of women in decision-making structures and their voice in the formulation of policies affecting their societies. World Economic Forum (Website) and UNDP in its Human Development Reports (2005-2011) suggest more or less similar modes of women's empowerment. These include economic participation, economic opportunity, educational attainment, health and wellbeing, and political empowerment (Carlos & Zahidi 2005; UNDP 2010). This research deals with the latter aspect of women's empowerment emphasised by GAD and gender mainstreaming, that is, women's political empowerment.

Since 1995, there have been efforts all over the world for women's inclusion in decision-making bodies and for advancing women's political equality with men (Dahlerup 2006). Article 4 of the CEDAW suggested all countries should adopt special measures for the development of women while the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action recommended the adoption of affirmative measures (quotas) to enable women's political emancipation. Since then approximately 100 countries have adopted such affirmative measures for women's active participation in decision-making positions (Quota Project Website).

This study is concerned with the introduction, implementation and impact of such affirmative measures for women's political representation. The study examines quotas for women in the two

South Asian countries of Pakistan and Bangladesh. They have been chosen because these two countries have some shared history, similar levels of socio-economic development and cultures of patriarchy that provide formidable obstacles to the introduction and implementation of initiatives related to women's political empowerment through GAD and gender mainstreaming.

The Importance and Justification for the Research

The importance of the use of quota measures for women's political empowerment can be determined from the fact that since 1995 approximately 50 countries have adopted affirmative measures either through constitutional amendments or through electoral laws, and political parties of 50 other countries have introduced gender quotas in their electoral lists and party structures to bring women to decision making positions and to be representatives in active politics (Quota Project Website; Dahlerup 2006). Such measures can overnight convert house-bound women into political representatives. These measures, however, do not take into account whether such women have the capacity and capability to perform these roles. Due to the characteristic of quota measures of converting women used to the domestic sphere into political representatives without any training or capacity building, the discussion is gaining strength between different scholars, researchers and policy makers whether these measures should be applied or not (Krook 2009). Many scholars and policy makers who favour the move towards 'affirmative measures' believe that women's empowerment is important for the overall development of society (Dahlerup 2002; Dahlerup 2006; Squires 2007; Krook 2009). In male-dominated societies, women are generally regarded as dependent on men and their intellectual capabilities and qualifications are not widely acknowledged. There are various structural barriers that restrict women's access to legislative assemblies. Quotas simply remove these structural barriers. Quotas are compensation for all those women who have the capabilities and capacity to

lead but cultural or other restraints do not permit them to get into positions of power. In this way, quotas facilitate women's basic right of equal political participation (Dahlerup 2006, Squires 2007, Krook 2009).

But there are also arguments against quotas (Gilger 2009; Hassim 2003; Dahlerup 2006; Kabeer 1999). Quotas negate the principle of equal opportunity. Quotas negate democratic values, as quota representatives are chosen without popular vote. The policy of merit is challenged as deserving people can lose out to less qualified women. Political parties should have the right to select candidates freely and independently, but quota regulations are seen to interfere with the independence of political parties (Gilger 2009; Hassim 2003; Dahlerup 2006; Kabeer 1999). Women who are unable to be elected on a popular vote remain politically inactive and act just as tokens in their political careers (Dahlerup 2006). Kabeer (2001) argued women's empowerment through quotas was actually the denial of their self determination.

> To attempt to predict at the outset of an intervention precisely how it will change women's lives without some knowledge of ways of "being and doing" which are realizable and valued by women in that context runs into the danger of prescribing a particular process of empowerment and thereby violating its essence, which is to enhance women's capacity for self determination (Kabeer 2001 as in Charlier et al. 2007, p. 2)

In spite of all this criticism, quota measures are being applied in almost all parts of the world, in countries of vastly contrasting conditions of development. South Asia is famous for its cultural, linguistic and religious variety but the one common feature among the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic South Asian societies is the treatment of women as second- grade citizens. Men culturally, economically and politically are preferred over women. Following the world trend and being signatories of CEDAW and BPFA 1995, Pakistan and Bangladesh reaffirmed their commitment to quotas for their women's political emancipation. Both countries had experience of quotas

giving representation to women in their elected assemblies at national and local levels. In Pakistan this commenced with the 1956 Constitution that authorised 3% of seats at all levels of government for women and then 10 seats in the 1973 Constitution and 20 seats under the authoritarian regime of Genral Zi-ul-Haq. In Bangladesh, reserved seats for women were evident in most parliaments after independence in 1972 and at subnational level after 1976. At national level there were fifteen seats set aside for women in 1972 while in 1978 the allocation doubled to 30. Two reserved seats were introduced for women in local governments in 1976 and raised to three in Thus, both countries had histories of political gender quotas but after signing BPFA 1995, both Pakistan and Bangladesh gave more substantial representation to women at national and local levels. Thus, in 2011, Pakistan had 60 reserved seats for women in the national assembly and Bangladesh had 45. In the context of pros and cons associated with the application of political gender quotas, this study is an endeavour to look into the political empowerment of women as an outcome of the affirmative measures in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Most of the research on gender, especially GAD inspired gender mainstreaming work on Pakistan and Bangladesh has been done on the elimination of discrimination against women. In the case of Bangladesh, most of the research has been done on the microcredit programs for women's empowerment. In the case of Pakistan, gender equity in the context of decentralisation has been the prime focus of research. Much less has been written on the impact of women's political empowerment through affirmative measures. International Development Research Centre of Canada reports that

> Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Nepal are four South Asian countries in which affirmative actions have been made to promote women's participation. There is considerably less information available on Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The material on Pakistan and Bangladesh is trend indicative as elected women were in place quite recently [since 2001 and 2004 respectively] (Mukhopadhyay 2005, p. 27).

Studies on gender quotas and women's empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh have been scattered both in time and focus of concern. The importance of this thesis is that it assembles this disparate research to provide a holistic account of the introduction, implementation and impact of gender quotas in politics in Pakistan and Bangladesh. This facilitates understanding of the overall processes associated with gender mainstreaming through quotas located in the social, cultural economical and political contexts of both countries. Moreover, this research looks comparatively women's political empowerment through quotas at national and local levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh which has not been done before in a holistic approach. The significance of choosing Bangladesh and Pakistan for comparison is that they are two patriarchal predominantly Muslim societies in South Asia. While their histories are intertwined and they share cultural similarities there are also differences. What this thesis considers and contributes to the literature is determination of whether the elements of similarity have produced historically similar patterns of political gender quotas and whether the countries' differentiating factors are leading to variations in the design and implementation of gender quotas. Comparative dimensions are examined in detail to see what similarities and differences are evident in the countries' experiences with gender political quotas. The research assists in identifying key factors explaining how a policy works or does not; how it can be interpreted; how it can be enacted and implemented in different ways. Also by adopting a historical institutionalist perspective, the countries' adoption of gender quotas is given a temporal dimension, an essential requirement for understanding the present situation and how it has been reached.

Objectives of the Research

Women constitute half of the population of Pakistan and Bangladesh but they have been culturally, socially, economically and politically discriminated against by men. The patriarchal

and male-dominated societies of Pakistan and Bangladesh have concentrated economic and political power in men in all spheres of public and private life. Such a situation has prevented women from gaining social and economic independence, and poli tical empowerment.

Following ratification of the BPFA 1995, Pakistan and Bangladesh, committed to introduce measures for women's political empowerment. Although gender quotas already existed in both countries, these were viewed as insufficient to represent the female populations in these countries. Consequently, Pakistan and Bangladesh introduced new political gender quotas at national and local levels to give women the right to enter elected political offices along with men. The overall objective of this thesis is to identify and analyse the introduction, implementation and impact of political quotas for women in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Several research questions will guide the research to achieve this overall objective:

1. What are the structural barriers that restrict women from active political participation in Pakistan and Bangladesh?
2. What are the roles of different actors such as elected officials, appointed officials, interest group (women organisations, donor agencies and political parties), media and research organisations in relation to the adoption and implementation of political gender quotas?
3. In the absence of social independence or economic empowerment, to what extent are women in Pakistan and Bangladesh able to demonstrate political empowerment through quotas? Are they behaving as being empowered or performing as 'proxy candidates' or tokens?

Structure of the Thesis

The research is divided into nine chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the thesis proceeds as described below:

Chapter two focuses on the general literature on the adoption of gender quotas as affirmative measures for women's political empowerment. First, it looks into what are quota measures and why have they been made into international commitments. Second, it explains different types of gender quotas and identifies structural barriers that restrict women's political participation in developing countries. Third, it explains what advantages advocates claim to derive from adopting gender quotas and finally it examines the criticisms that have been levelled at gender quotas in politics.

Chapter three examines the general literature on gender mainstreaming and women's political empowerment in a historical context. Focusing on developing countries, it describes and explains the transition of theory and practice from Women in Development (WID) to Women and Development (WAD) to Gender and Development (GAD) and gender mainstreaming. The chapter provides insight into the approaches of historical institutionalism and delineates the roles of various actors involved in the adoption and formulation of gender quota policies. An analytical framework is presented at the end of this chapter that derives from selected concepts presented in chapters two and three.

Chapter four presents the methodology for this research, which is a comparative analysis of case studies. Two country cases Pakistan and Bangladesh have been selected for this research on the analysis of political gender quotas at national and local levels. The chapter describes the research model that has been designed for this thesis. Limitations of the research are described in detail at the end of the chapter.

Chapter five presents the socio-economic and political conditions of women in Pakistan. The chapter demonstrates that women in Pakistan are neither socially independent nor economically

empowered. It also traces historically the political participation of women in Pakistan at national and local levels.

Chapter six presents the socio-economic and political conditions of women in Bangladesh. As in the previous chapter on Pakistan, this chapter demonstrates that the women of Bangladesh are neither socially independent nor economically empowered. The chapter also provides a historical account of political participation of women in Bangladesh at national and local levels.

Chapter seven presents a comparative analysis of Pakistan and Bangladesh on various structural barriers that prevent women from taking an active part in politics. It uses data presented in previous chapters for the analysis and follows the analytical framework designed to critically evaluate the research findings.

Chapter eight provides a comparative analysis of the roles of different actors involved in the adoption and implementation of gender quota policies at national and local levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Chapter nine uses empirical data presented in earlier chapters to facilitate comparative analysis between Pakistan and Bangladesh on the degree of women's empowerment achieved at national and local levels through gender quotas. This chapter critically analyses the role played by women parliamentarians and local councillors in both countries and evaluates whether gender quotas have politically empowered these women and the general cause of women's empowerment.

Chapter ten presents the conclusion of this thesis including a summary of the research and its major findings and what implications these have for future policy.

2. Adoption of Gender Quotas as Affirmative Measures for Women's Political Empowerment

> Recent years have witnessed a surge of interest in patterns of political representation. The most common reforms, from a global perspective, have been provisions for the increased representation of women. Indeed, more than one hundred countries today have seen the proposal, adoption or repeal of quotas for the selection of female candidates….since 1995 (Krook 2003, p. 1).

The chapter seeks to explain this widespread adoption of gender quotas by political parties, national legislatures and local councils. This chapter is divided into six parts. The first part looks into what are these quota measures and why have they been made as international commitments. The second part presents a global scenario of the adoption of gender quotas in different regions of the world. The third part describes different types of gender quotas. These can be didvided into two main types – legal and party quotas. As will be discussed in detail the legal quotas can be either set in the constitution or in electoral laws and regulations and can involve prescribing a minimum number or percentage of women candidates or reserved seats for women. The party quotas for women are voluntarily set by political parties. In addition to detailed descriptions of these quota types the third part of the chapter also establishes which electoral systems are highly suitable for the adoption of gender quotas. The fourth part identifies the imperatives that account for the adoption of gender quotas throughout the world. The fifth part describes some structural

barriers that inhibit women's participation in political activities. The last part examines the criticisms that have been levelled at quotas in politics?

Political Gender Quotas as a Part of International Commitments for Women's Political Empowerment

The main purpose of this section is to explain the concept of gender quotas in politics. The first part of this section explains how gender quotas became international commitments. This is followed by delineation of the way the term 'gender quota' has been utilised in different international resolutions and commitments and how the literature defines gender political quotas.

It has been strongly advocated by individuals and institutions that democracy cannot be achieved unless men and women have equal opportunity and access in every aspect of public life, most importantly in decision-making processes (Karl 1995). Thus, the Council of Inter Parliamentary Union in 1994 stated that

> The concept of democracy will only assume true and dynamic significance when political parties and national legislation are decided upon jointly by men and women with equitable regard for the interests and aptitudes of both halves of the population (Dahlerup 2006, p. 16).

To achieve this aspiration nations around the globe have been introducing affirmative measures or quotas to place women in decision-making positions in political bodies, both at national and local levels. In the past, women have been ignored, as politics in the majority of countries around the world has been generally perceived as the realm of men. Squires (2007) argues that since 1788, when women first gained the right to contest election in the United States of America, to 2006, women's political representation in national parliaments has remained 'notoriously low'. From just 3% across the globe in 1945, it only reached 16.6% in 2006. The figure has inched

forward to 19.3% in 2011 (Websites of the Quota Project IDEA & IPU). In such circumstances of persistently low levels of women's representation, quotas or special/affirmative measures are 'important mechanism to achieve gender balance in political institutions' (Squires 2007, p. 24).

The process of suggesting special measures for women's empowerment started with the *'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW[1]) in 1979. It was the first international resolution to suggest special measures for women's increased involvement in national as well as local politics. This was followed by the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) created through the Beijing Declaration[2] 1995 which used the words 'positive measures' for the quick incorporation of women into politics. This declaration was ratified by 189 countries around the world. Since then there has been a considerable increase in the number of women entering into national and local assemblies. The concept and practice of 'gender quotas' were inferred by politicians, policy makers, scholars and researchers from the phrases 'appropriate measures' and 'positive actions' utilised in CEDAW and the BPFA respectively. Before going into details of different aspects of gender quotas, it is apposite to view the relevant clauses of the international resolutions. Taking as a starting point towards gender equality, Article 1 of CEDAW defines 'gender discrimination' as:

> Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (CEDAW 1979, Art. 1).

[1] CEDAW was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and on 3 September 1981, it came into force.

[2] The Beijing Declaration was issued on the eve of the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) held in Beijing in 1995 and was organized by the United Nations

Article 4 of CEDAW goes a step further by indicating the legitimacy of employing special measures to boost the status, power and welfare of women, though it does indicate their temporary nature anticipating for a positive change in future:

> Temporary special measures are aimed at accelerating de-facto equality between women and men and shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present convention

Article 7 of CEDAW then focuses on the political sphere and women's role in it:

> State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and in particular shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:
>
> (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publically elected bodies.
>
> (b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.

Through these articles, CEDAW established an agenda of action for putting an end to sex-based discrimination. Countries ratifying the Convention were required to repeal all discriminatory provisions in their laws, to take steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination practised against women by individuals, organisations and enterprises and to guard against discrimination against women in their domestic legislation.

The pattern set by CEDAW was further strengthened at the *Fourth World Conference on Women* (FWCW) 1995. Discussions about discriminatory attitudes and practices (of individuals, organisations and institutions around the world) and unequal power relations (between men and women) were seen to have contributed to the under-representation of women in arenas of political decision-making. Instead of focusing on women's lack of resources, lack of will or unsuitability to participate in politics, attention was now directed towards those institutions and

cultural mechanisms of exclusion that prevented women from obtaining an equitable share of political positions in most political institutions in the world. This was stated in Article 190 (a) and 190 (b) of the BPFA. It suggested positive measures for the enhanced participation of women in the political process. It states,

> Governments:
> (a) Commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities and in the judiciary, including, inter alia, settings specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administrative positions;
> (b) Take measures, including where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same level as men

FWCW brought about a new discussion of equal representation demanding a certain minimum level of representation as a first step for women. This was expressed through the term 'gender balance' utilised in Article 190 (a) of the FWCW. The goal was seen no longer as 'more women in politics' but rather as 'equal participation' and 'equitable distribution of power and decision-making at all levels'. This was to be enabled through affirmative actions.

From the terms 'special measures' 'affirmative/positive actions' in various international conventions, scholars, researchers and policy makers concerned with women and politics in countries around the globe adopted the term 'gender quotas'. This was later incorporated for the first time by the special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations 1998. Paragraph 100 (a) of Section (IV) states that,

> Governments committed themselves to set and encourage the use of explicit short term bound targets or measurable goals, including where appropriate, quotas to promote progress towards gender balance including women's equal access and full participation on

> a basis of equality with men in all areas and at all levels of public life, especially in decision making positions, in political parties and political activities, in all government ministries and at key policy making institutions, as well as in local development bodies and authorities (APGEN 2000, p. 3).

The practical manifestation of the terms 'special measures' and 'positive actions' was found in the specification of quotas for women in elected bodies at various levels of government. Squires (2007, p. 91) clarified these linkages as follows:

> Quotas are a form of positive or affirmative action. Positive action is frequently used to describe a variety of measures designed to increase the educational, employment or political outcomes of 'under-represented minorities.

Usually the advocates of positive actions/special measures have interpreted these initiatives as a means to reduce discrimination and as remedial measures for adverse treatment against depressed groups, for example, women and minorities (Squires 2007). Broadly speaking, a quota is the proportional allocation of parliamentary seats or positions to groups of people identified as deprived (Stokes 2005). Thus, writing specifically on the idea of a gender quota, Siddiqui (1998, p. 22) observed that:

> Gender quota is a strong affirmative action that involves more positive steps to eliminate past injustice such as reverse discrimination, hiring candidates on the basis of race and gender in order to reach equal or near equal results, proportionate representation in each area of society.

The Asia Pacific Gender Equality Network (APGEN) defines gender quotas similarly:

> Gender quota is an affirmative action: tool aimed at ensuring that women constitute a critical mass in decision and policy making bodies (APGEN 2000, p. 5).

The following section examines the way countries across the globe have adopted quota measures.

Adoption of Gender Quotas: Global Scenario

With gender quotas being placed on the international agenda for political action, the questions arose as how countries around the globe would react to adopt gender quota measures and in what ways would they interpret, design and implement these measures. This section describes the adoption of gender quotas by various regions on fast track or incremental track, as described by Dahlerup (2006) and explained later in the section.

After BPFA 1995, the pace of women's inclusion in politics in all regions of the world has not only been astonishing but also seems revolutionary as poor countries like Rwanda and Mozambique have overtaken or equalled Scandinavian countries, the previous world leaders in women's representation (Quota Project website). Indeed, Rwanda has emerged as world leader in terms of women's political participation (IPU Website). Table 2.1 lists the top 15 countries in terms of women's representation in national parliaments.

Table 2.1: Top 15 Countries in Terms of Women's in Parliament (as of 31 December 2010)

Rank	Country	Lower or Single House				Type of Quota
		Last Elections Held	Seats	Women	Percentage of Women	
1	Rwanda	Sep 2008	80	45	56.3	Reserved Seats (Constitutional) Quotas
2	Sweden	Sep 2006	349	162	46.4	Voluntary Political Party Quotas
3	South Africa	Apr 2009	400	178	44.5	Voluntary Political Party Quotas
4	Cuba	Jan 2008	614	265	43.2	No Quota
5	Iceland	Apr 2009	63	27	42.9	Voluntary Political Party Quotas
6	Netherlands	Nov 2006	150	63	42.0	Voluntary Political Party Quotas
7	Finland	Mar 2007	200	80	40.0	No Quota
8	Norway	Sep 2009	169	66	39.1	Voluntary Political Party Quotas
9	Angola	Sep 2008	220	85	38.6	Legislated Candidate Quotas
10	Argentina	Jun 2009	257	99	38.5	Legislated Candidate Quotas
11	Belgium	Jun 2007	150	57	38.0	Legislated Candidate Quotas
11	Denmark	Nov 2007	179	68	38.0	No Quota
12	Costa Rica	Feb 2006	57	21	36.8	Legislated Candidate Quotas
13	Spain	Mar 2008	350	128	36.6	Legislated Candidate Quotas
14	Andorra	Apr 2009	28	10	35.7	No Quota
15	New Zealand	Nov 2008	122	41	33.6	No Quota

Source: Website of IPU, Quota Project

Table 2.2 shows the regional averages of the women as members of lower houses around the globe. This reveals the pace at which different regions of the world have adopted gender quotas.

Table 2.2: Regional Averages for Women as Members of the Lower Houses in January 2012

Regions	Percentage of Women in Lower House
Nordic Countries	42.3
Americas	22.6
Europe OSCE Countries including Nordic Countries	22.3
Europe OSCE Countries excluding Nordic Countries	20.5
Sub Saharan Africa	20.4
Asia	18.3
Arab States	13.5
Pacific	12.9

Source: Inter parliamentary Union (IPU 2012)

Table 2.2 shows that Nordic Europe is leading the world with the highest proportion of women as parliamentarians followed by the Americas (Latin, Central and Caribbean) while the Pacific region is at the bottom of the list. It is surprising to note that Europe excluding the Nordic countries is almost level with Africa in female representation but is educationally and culturally much conservative than European countries. This aspect is discussed later in the Chapter where the adoption of quotas has been linked with conflict ridden societies and countries in a transitional phase from autocracy to democracy.

Due to the high representation of women in Nordic parliaments, scholars have been declaring them as a model for the world but Dahlerup believes that Scandinavia is no longer a model to

emulate (Dahlerup & Freidenavall 2005). Dahlerup observes that after awarding women the right to vote, it took Scandinavian countries 80 years to reach the present status (women's percentage in national legislatures more than 40%). Women's parliamentary representation reached 20% to 30% in the 1970s due to various initiatives such as extended socio-economic opportunities for women, women's struggles against male dominated assemblies and the threat of women's political parties (realised in Iceland later in the 1980s).

Political parties in Nordic Europe took decisive actions in adopting gender quotas. The Norwegian Labour Party in 1983 took the historic decision that men and women must be each given at least 40% representation in all nominations and elections. In later years Christian Democrats, Social Left and Centre Party of Norway followed suit (Dahlerup 1998). The Danish Social Democratic Party adopted the same rule in 1988 but only for regional and local elections. The law was, however abolished in 1996. In Denmark after limited quota experiments it was realised that equality was more or less achieved and no more quotas were required (Dahlerup 1998). The Swedish Democratic Party in 1994 adopted a zipper or zebra principle i.e. every second nomination on the list must be a woman. It means the names of males and females must be on an alternate basis in any electoral list (Dahlerup 1998). Dahlerup further elaborates that since 1994, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and Greens (the three biggest political parties in Sweden) have constantly utilised the zebra or zipper principle in their electoral lists for every parliamentary, local, regional and EU election. In Iceland, (the only Scandinavian country where a women's party was established) The Women's Party introduced quotas in 1983. Later this was adopted by all major parties and the trend still continued when the United Front (a union of some major political parties) adopted quotas in 2002. Finland is the only Scandinavian country where no party ever adopted political quotas for election purposes. After the introduction

of political party quotas, it took 15 to 20 years to reach at the figure of 40% females in the parliaments of Nordic Countries.

> But today women of the world are not willing to wait for that long..... The introduction of electoral quotas is a symbol of women's impatience today as well as an efficient tool for increasing women's representation (Dahlerup 2003a, p. 3).

On the basis of Scandinavian experience, Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2005) define two different tracks to equal political representation for women and men, which are the incremental track and the fast track. While the incremental track, such as in Scandinavia, describes the gradual increase in women's political participation, the fast track represents a quick adoption of gender quotas for women's political representation, such as in Latin America and Africa. It took approximately 60 years for Denmark, Norway, and Sweden to exceed the 20% threshold for women's representation in parliament, and 70 years to reach 30% (Dahlerup 2003a). However, quotas were not introduced in these countries until women had already reached about 25% of the seats in the 1980s, which was, at that time, also the highest proportion in the world (Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2005, 2003a). Similar tracks can be found within other developed countries in Western Europe, North America and New Zealand. In such countries, these policies originated with women in civil society and inside the political parties, which presented gender quotas as a way to win support among female voters (Dahlerup 2005, 2006; Tripp & Kang 2008, Dahlerup et al. 2008).

In contrast, the fast track method is a common situation among developing countries because women have considerably less political resources as men (Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2005; Tripp & Kang 2008). Therefore, the responsibility for dealing with the under-representation of women rests with the political institutions such as parliaments. In line with this conception of women's

under-representation, mandated quotas for the recruitment and election of female candidates are needed. In 1990, the UN Economic and Social Council endorsed a target of 30% women in decision-making positions in the world by 1995 (IPU Website). However, in 1995, only 10% of the world's parliamentary members were women. The BPFA 1995, on the other hand, has been very influential, and women's movements all over the world have attempted to give the demand for gender quotas legitimacy by referring to the Platform for Action (Krook 2009; Dahlerup 2005; Tripp & Kang 2008; Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2005).

Latin America is the leading continent when it comes to the introduction of gender quotas in politics after the Beijing Platform (Arauja & Gracia 2006; Htun & Jones 2002; Miguel 2008). Out of 19 Latin American Countries, initially 12 but later 11 countries endorsed gender quotas for securing gender balance in legislative assemblies (Dahlerup 2003b). Venezuela initially introduced a quota system in 1997 but withdrew it in 2000 (Peschard 2003; Htun & Jones 2002). Most of the Latin American countries adopted gender quotas in 1996 and 1997 within 2 years of ratification of the Beijing Platform for Action 1995 (Dahlerup 2003b). Uruguay was the last country to adopt adopting gender quotas in 2009, making the total to 12. Chile, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela are the Latin American nations who still consider gender quotas not desirable for their political systems (Dahlerup 2003b). Economic reforms at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s to reduce public spending had a significant negative impact on women's living conditions. Thus, the epicentre of Latin American women's struggles became the process of re-democratisation, strategically focused on enforcing women's rights as women and citizens in the political and social spheres (Dahlerup 2003b; Arauja & Gracia 2006; Htun & Jones 2002).

Africa is another continent with countries introducing gender quotas mostly after 1995 and on the fast track model. In Tanzania, for example, 20% seats were reserved for women in 1995. In 2005, this rose to 21.36% and 97 seats went to women, 17 from constituencies and 80 from special seats (Waring 2010). In 2009, a constitutional amendment gave 30% representation to women on reserved seats. Women of Tanzania had 30.4% representation in parliament in 2011 (IPU Website). Senegal, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Angola, Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, Rwanda and Kenya are countries from African continent that adopted gender quotas at a rapid pace after 1995 (IPU Website; Quota Project Website; Dahlerup 2003a; Tripp et al. 2006). Rwanda is now the world leader (56% women in its parliament in 2011) in terms of women's representation in parliament after 1995 (IPU Website). Apart from this, seven countries in Africa have adopted voluntary political party quotas. These include Mozambique, Mali, Cote d' Ivoire, Cameroon, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe (Quota Project Website).

The overall representation of women in European Parliaments stands at 22.3%, as is shown in Table 2.2. Inclusion of women in national parliaments in many European countries varies from a low of 8% in Ukraine to a high of 45% in Sweden (Dahlerup et al. 2008; IPU Website). Only eight European countries have legislated quotas at the national or sub-national level while political parties of 27 countries have voluntarily adopted some form of quotas (IPU Website).

Asia has been adopting gender quotas at a rapid pace. Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Taiwan, Republic of Korea and Indonesia are countries from Asia that have adopted gender quotas (Quota Project Website). The Philippines and Thailand have adopted voluntary political quotas. However, there is a tendency for quota provisions to be legislated, rather than for political parties to implement their own informal party

quotas, as is common in Western Europe (IDEA Website; Dahlerup 2002; Norris 2004). There is also a tendency for quotas to take the form of reserved seats, a popular method of quota implementation in majority plurality system, which tend to predominate in the region (IDEA Website; Majid & Kabeer 2008).

The Arab region cannot be categorised utilising fast track or incremental track of quotas. Arab societies use all possible means to entrench their value-based heritage, by promoting customs and traditions that curb women's activities and confine them to the domestic sphere of the family existence to the framework of the family (Abou-Zeid 2006; Dahlerup 2006). Arab countries are the last countries to give the right to vote to women. The majority of Arab countries do not apply gender quotas but in the last five years, some Arab countries have started giving representation to women in parliaments thus explaining why they have surpassed the Pacific region in female representation (Waring 2010). For instance, in 2006, for the first time, in the United Arab Emirates both men and women contested elections, in which one woman was successful and eight were selected on quotas (Waring 2010). Kuwait, for the first time, included two women in parliament on reserved seats in 2009 (Waring 2010). Jordan (5% reserved seats for women adopted in 2003), Egypt (12% reserved seats for women adopted in 2009) and Morocco (9% reserved seats for women adopted in 2002) are other examples of Arab countries that have started employing gender quotas (Waring 2010).

The Pacific region in spite of New Zealand's 32.2% representation of women and Australia's 24.7% representation in national parliaments is at the bottom of the regional averages of the world (see Table 2.2). The regional average for the Pacific is 12.9% as of January 2012. Five Pacific Island countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu) are in the bottom seven countries which have no women members of parliament, the

other two being Suadi Arabia and Qatar. Other Pacific countries such as Vanuatu, Tonga and the Republic of the Marshall Islands have only one women representative in parliament as of January 2012 (IPU Website; PIFC 2006). These countries seem least influenced to adopting fast track or incremental track for women's political participations despite their international and regional commitments including CEDAW, 1994 Pacific Platform for Action, BPFA 1995, Millennium Development Goals 2000, and the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 (PIFC 2006).

In sum, different countries in different regions in the world are increasingly adopting gender quotas at a fast track rather than incremental track. To elect women by the fast track may lead to rapid results with regard to the number and proportion of women in politics, but the effect on policy outcomes may not be clear if these women legislators are elected with no power base in their party, civic organisations, or constituencies (Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2005, Dahlerup 2006).

Types of Political Gender Quotas

The idea to apply gender quotas in representative assemblies is a unique approach but not a single strategy that can be applied everywhere with one universal procedure. The term 'quota' rather involves varied strategies and systems with different outcomes (Frankl 2004). Different studies on gender quotas indicate that there are systematic variations in the features, adoption and implementation of gender quotas (Krook et al. 2009). Different countries adopt different types of gender quotas according to their political and electoral systems. However, the quotas all share the common objective of maximising the number of female participants in elected assemblies at national and local levels. Gender quotas in most of the cases require revision of the the election rules by determining the eligibility of various candidates. Such changes have been

the most prevalent type of electoral reform in recent years. Gender quotas stipulate the nomination of women candidates either through legal or constitutional means or through voluntary changes to internal party regulations. This section describes different types of gender quotas and how these are being applied in different countries.

Different scholars have provided different classifications and types of gender quotas. Classifications revolve around legislative or constitutional quotas, voluntary quotas and reserved seats. However, for the sake of simplicity and better understanding, gender quotas can be categorised into two broad types: legal quotas and voluntary party quotas. Legal quotas are divided into legislative quotas and constitutional quotas. Both, legislative and constitutional quotas are further divided into candidate quotas and reserved seats (APGEN 2000; Araujo & Gracia 2006; Dahlerup 1998, 2002, 2005, 2006; Htun & Jones 2002; Norris 2004; Goetz & Hassim 2003; Hassim 2003; 2008; Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2005; Majid & Kabir 2008; Krook 2006, 2009; Pandey & Ford 2011).

Legislative and Constitutional Quotas

Quotas were initially introduced at a party level in Western Europe (Austria, Netherlands and Sweden) in the 1970s and 1980s but legislative and constitutional forms are now present across the globe, particularly in Latin America, Africa and Asia causing Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2005) to suggest that 'quota fever' has affected the world (Squires 2007, p. 25). Legal gender quotas are those which are mandated either by the constitution, such as in Burkina Faso, the Philippines, Nepal, Uganda, or by electoral law as in many parts of Latin America, as well as Belgium, France and Slovenia (Quota Project Website; Htun & Jones 2002; Dahlerup 2003a; Norris 2004). In the broadest terms, legal quotas may be defined as legislated regulations that in

public elections require a certain minimum number or percentage of a specific group (in this case, women) to be present either in the pool of potential candidates, the candidates who stand for election, or in one of the institutions which constitutes the political system (Araujo & Gracia 2006; Paxton et al. 2009). Table 2.3 presents the global picture of the adoption of legal quotas:

Table 2.3: Legislative Quotas for Women in Single or Lower Houses of Parliament in December 2009

Name and Category of the Country according to Human Development Report 2010	Women to be Included in Parliament as Percentage of the Total Number of Parliamentarians	Year Adopted	Women in Parliament as Percentage of the Total Number of Parliamentarians
Albania	30	2008	16
Angola	30	2005	39
Argentina	30	1991	39
Armenia	15	2007	9
Belgium	50	2002	39
Bolivia	30	1997	25
Bosnia-Herzegovina	30	2001	17
Brazil	25	1997	9
Burkina Faso	30	2009	15
Burundi	30	2005	32
China	22	2007	21
Costa Rica	40	1996	39
Dominican Republic	33	2000	21

Ecuador	30	2000	32
France	50	1999/2000	19
Guyana	33	Unknown	30
Honduras	30	2004	18
Indonesia	30	2003	18
Iraq	25	2004	25
Korea, North	20	1998	16
Korea, South	50	2004	15
Kyrgyzstan	30	2007	23
Liberia	30	2005	13
Mauritania	30–50	2006	18
Mexico	30	2002	26
Nepal	5	1990	33
Niger	10	2004	12
Panama	30	1996	9
Paraguay	20	1996	13
Peru	30	2000	28
Philippines	Must include women	1995	22
Portugal	33	2006	27
Serbia	30	2004	22
Spain	40	2007	36
Uruguay	30	2008	15
Uzbekistan	30	2004	22
Venezuela	30	1998	17

Source: Adapted from Celis et al 2011: 520-521

Very High Human Development
High Human Development
Medium Human Development
Low Human Development

Table 2.3 shows that legal quotas are found across the range of human development categories from countries with very high human development to countries with low human development. Countries of very high human development that have adopted gender quotas for women's political empowerment include Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain and South Korea. Countries of high human development that have introduced political gender quotas include Albania, Serbia, Armenia, Bosnia, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Countries of medium human development (China, Philippines, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Bolivia, Honduras and Paraguay) and countries of low human development Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Iraq, North Korea and Nepal have also adopted legislative political gender quotas.

Table 2.3 reveals that 19 out of 37 countries listed in the table are countries of medium to low human development that have utilised legislative quotas. This suggests that rather than being dependent on the level of economic development, the introduction and implementation of quotas appears to be more closely related to political factors. The experience in various regions suggests that in many less developed countries, transition to democracy, or the reform of the political system following conflict, has provided opportunities for putting women's rights on the political agenda through the introduction of quotas. In these countries, quotas may be seen as a way to establish the legitimacy of the new political system during democratic transition or the creation of new democratic institutions.

The phenomenon of wide adoption of political gender quotas in less developed countries can be related to the fact that during the last 17 years, a variety of international organisations have issued declarations recommending that all member-states aim for 30% women in all political bodies (Haider 2011; Pandey & Ford 2011). In some cases, political leaders adopt quotas themselves possibly in part due to heavy pressure from the international community for the introduction of reforms for increased human development or for the advancement of marginalised groups such as women (Dahlerup 2006; Squires 2007; Krook 2009). In other instances, at the time of new elections to appease public demands, political leaders adopt quotas where local women's movements and transnational non-governmental organisations share information on quota strategies across national borders (Dahlerup 2006; Squires 2007; Krook 2009). In still other cases, international events provide new sources of leverage in national debates, shifting the balance in favour of local and transnational actors pressing for quota adoption (Norris 2004; Krook, 2006, Majid & Kabir 2008; Pandey & Ford 2011). Reasons for the wide adoption of gender quotas are discussed in detail in next section of the chapter.

Legal quotas are normally adopted on the basis of agreement between top politicians from all the significant political parties in a country. Hassim (2008) argues the most prominent feature of legal quotas is provision for sanctions on political parties or governmental bodies for non-compliance. For instance, a political party may be disqualified from contesting elections if it does not fulfil the minimum criteria in the quota regulations.

Candidate Quotas

Legislative quotas can take two forms: candidate quotas and reserved seats. Candidate quotas require by law that a certain percentage of women should be on the candidate lists of political

parties in an election process. Candidate quotas target the first stage of the party selection process, the stage of finding aspirants, that is, those willing to be considered for nomination, either through a primary recommendation or through the nomination committee of a political party (Dahlerup 2006). Candidate gender quotas are covered by rules that demand a certain number or percentage of women be represented in the pool of candidates that will contest for seats in an assembly election (Pandey & Ford 2011; Squires 2007; Krook 2009). This can be illustrated through an example: if there are 30 seats reserved for women in a national legislature, political parties may select 70 women aspirants to become MPs. This is called an aspirant quota. The second level is called the candidate quota where actual candidates are finalised from among aspirant candidates. The actual candidates are awarded party tickets to contest elections. The regulatory provisions for candidate quotas for political parties carry some drawbacks. Political parties that are conservative in nature and are reluctant to adopt new norms that conflict with old party traditions may manipulate the electoral lists by placing the women at the bottom of the list or in constituencies where they have low chances of winning (Dahlerup 2002; Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2005). The quota law passed in 2007 in Spain's proportional representation system mandates a minimum of 40% for both sexes on candidate lists for elections to the national legislature, but only resulted in 36% of representatives in the lower house and 30% of representatives in the Senate being women after the 2008 elections (Pandey & Ford 2011). This was due to parties putting women in less favourable positions than men on ballots in districts where only the top candidates from the party was likely to get selected (Dahlerup et al. 2008). Since candidates are listed alphabetically on electoral lists, this was accomplished through women with names later in the alphabet being selected for more contested areas. To counter such

manipulation by political parties with candidate quotas, reserved seats were introduced as another form of legislative party quota.

Reserved Seats

Reserved seats are decided not by the party but by the government which mandates that a certain number or percentage among those elected must be women – and if they are not elected, then they are appointed (Krook. 2006, p. 306).

> Reserved seats, as their name suggests, set aside seats for women that men are not eligible to contest. They are often established through changes to constitutions, but in some cases also electoral laws, to mandate a minimum number of female legislators (Celis et al. 2011, p. 518).

Table 2.4 lists countries which have adopted reserved seats as legal quotas to increase women's political representation in the lower house of parliament. Table 2.4 indicates that reserved seats have been exclusively adopted by countries of the Middle East, South Asia and Africa. Most of the countries that opted for reserved seats are either weak democracies (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Jordan, and Egypt) or conflict-ridden societies (Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Uganda, Eritrea,). The reason lies in the fact that rulers of both weak democracies and conflict-ridden societies are least resistant to international pressure from donors and international institutions. Following the BPFA 1995, women's political participation through quotas became part of an international agenda (Matland 1998; Htun & Jones 2002; Norris 2004; Krook 2005; Haider 2011; Pandey & Ford 2011).

Table 2.4: Reserved Seats for Women in Single or Lower Houses of Parliament in December 2009

Country	Women to be Included in Parliament as a Percentage of the Total Number of Parliamentarians	Year Adopted	Women in Parliament as Percentage of the Total Number of Parliamentarians
Afghanistan	27	2004	28
Bangladesh	13	2004	19
Djibouti	10	2002	14
Egypt	12	2009	13
Eritrea	30	Unknown	22
Jordan	5	2003	11
Kenya	3	1997	10
Morocco	9	2002	11
Pakistan	18	2002	22
Rwanda	30	2003	56
Somalia	12	2004	7
Sudan	13	2005	26
Tanzania	30	2005	36
Uganda	18	2001	31

Source: Adopted from Celis et al. 2011, p. 518

The rulers of some countries in transition to democracy, conflict-ridden societies and weak democracies have felt obliged to follow the recommendations of donors and their consultants. For this reason, Rwanda has emerged as a world leader in women's representation with women making up 56% of the parliament. It remains another discussion whether these women are playing influential roles in the parliamentary politics of these countries or merely serving as tokens or proxy members. However, it is still encouraging for women of the medium to less human developed countries listed in Table 2.2 that to have reserved political offices thus making it certain that they are actively involved in politics.

Celis et al. (2011) describe three ways for the introduction of reserved seats in different political systems. First, there is direct election for a specified number of places open only to women candidates such as in Bangladesh at the local level. Second, a fixed number of seats are for women and these are allocated to political parties in the assembly according to the number of the seats or votes each party obtained in general elections. Examples of this practice are found in Pakistan and Bangladesh at the national level. Third, the number of seats reserved for women is fixed and MPs select these women MPs after the general election. This system was used in Bangladesh before 2004. Political parties, before finally selecting the candidates for national or provincial legislatures, filled the reserve seats in a two level process, first identifying aspirant candidates and then selecting actual candidates. The second type of reserved seats arrangement is most common at national level (76%) among all the countries shown in Table 2.4. The rationale may be traced to the fact that national level constituencies are large in size and population and it becomes difficult for female candidates who are socially and economically dependent on their male family members to cover such big areas and populations in their election campaigns (Celis et al. 2011). The third type of reserved seats does not suit female candidates as it involves the

opinion of all the directly elected members of a national assembly or lower house and to sway the opinion of a full house may involve money, influence and family politics (Krook 2009). The second type of reserved seats authorises political parties to appoint female candidates, thus the authority remains in the hands of parities rather than individuals. Money, influence and family politics may still be found in this type.

Voluntary Party Quotas

In addition to the legally prescribed quotas for women in elected assemblies, there are voluntary quotas introduced by political parties even if the government does not mandate them (Krook 2004, 2007; Dahlerup 2006; Squires 2007). Voluntary party quotas are the most common type of quota and are currently in place in 51 countries, which constitutes 61% of all countries with any type of gender quota (Quota Project Website). Countries of Northern Europe such as Norway, Sweden, some Western European countries like Germany, Austria, France, Belgium and Italy, and Latin American countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, and Ecuador provide examples of voluntary party quotas (Dahlerup 2003b; Norris 2004). As such quotas are voluntary in nature, the parties leaders employ these measures to provide equality of opportunity between male and female party members. Voluntary party quotas can break the traditional party practices of preferential treatment to influentials or to a particular sex. In the words of Krook et al. (2009, p. 785):

> In this way, they alter party practices by setting out new criteria for candidate selection that require elites to recognize existing biases and consider alternative spheres of political recruitment.

In some countries such as South Africa and Tanzania only one or two parties have opted to use quotas. However, if the leading party in a country uses a quota, such as the ANC in South Africa,

this may have a significant impact on the overall rate of female representation (Celis et al. 2011). The African National Congress Party (ANC) reserves 30% of the party list of candidates for women at the national level and 50% for women at local level. Since such quotas stem from voluntary decision-making within the party, they are often seen as a conscious demonstration of a liberal and progressive party culture (Dahlerup 2003b; Krook 2005). Voluntary party quotas enable political parties to show the electorate in practice that they are committed to gender equality. This can be used as a tool for popular mobilisation in competition with other parties.

In some countries of Northern Europe, political parties of the left have engaged in such political mobilization to enhance their credibility with particular elements of the electorate (Krook 2007; Dahlerup et al. 2008). Thus, in Sweden, the Social Democrat Party, the Left Party and the Green Party have introduced the fifty-fifty system for women's representation. This means that every other candidate in the parties' electoral lists is taken from the opposite sex. This form of quota is said to incorporate the zigzag or zipper principle because there are two separate lists of male and female candidates and these two lists are then combined like a zipper (Dahlerup 2006; Dahlerup et al. 2008). The only thing, which needs to be settled, is who will top the list, a man or a woman. The zipper or zigzag system seems to be a good solution to where political parties have deliberately manipulated electoral lists and placed women at the bottom of the list or in potentially weak constituencies (Dahlerup 2002, 2006; Squires 2007, Krook 2006, Dahlerup et al. 2008).

The type of quota is widely seen as a determinant of the effectiveness of the quotas for women. According to Krook (2007, 2009), the adoption of different types of quotas entails systemic reform of different institutions. Reserved seats mostly change the mechanisms of elections to mandate a minimum number of seats for women. On the other hand, party quotas, from its

voluntary nature, necessitate new systems of candidate selection in the party regulations (Matland 2005). Finally, legislative quotas mostly include revisions of the legal determination of equality and involve related alterations of constitutions or the electoral laws (Krook 2003; Squires 2007; Pandey & Ford 2011). The issue of effectiveness of quota type seems to be controversial among scholars. There are some scholars who state that the answer of this question is multidimensional. Thus, the complexity of the issue prevents them to indicating one type as more effective than another type of quota as it is argued that multiple variables affect the effectiveness of quotas (Krook 2009). Some studies consider voluntary party quotas as the most effective type of quotas because they are voluntarily accepted and introduced. Other writers argue that voluntary party quotas are hardly to be met. Still others are reserved seats as the most effective since they directly indicate the outcome in terms of seats rather than in percentages of women candidates (Dahlerup 2005; Tripp & Kang 2008; Krook et al. 2009; Squires 2007). The Electoral system of a country is also considered as a determinant for the choice of the type of political gender quotas (Matland 2005).

Types of Quotas and Electoral Systems

After BPFA 1995, almost 100 countries adopted political gender quotas for enhanced women's representation in national or local politics under a wide range of political systems including single member plurality, multimember plurality, majoritarian electoral, two round, alternate, list or proportional representation, mixed electoral and single transferable vote (Rule 1987, 1990; Dahlerup & Friednavall 2005; Matland 2005). According to the political system and choice of quota mechanism, these changes have produced different results for women's representation in different countries (Farrell 2001; Matland 2005). An electoral system is an enabling condition for women to increase their participation in institutional politics. But it should be noted that

'enabling' is only creating an opportunity: the real power remains with the political parties to positively or negatively utilise various provisions of an electoral system. This can be explained through an example of proportional representation (PR) system.

A growing literature on women's political participation indicates that proportional representation (PR) systems select higher percentages of women into politics than other electoral systems (Matland 2005; Krook 2006, 2006, 2009; Dahlerup 2002, 2005, 2006; Tremblay 2008). The representation of women has become more than 30% in countries using zigzag or zebra principles in tandem with a PR system. But at the same time, there are instances where political parties manouevre the PR lists and lessen their potential impact such as in Spain (2007) and France (2002) (Krook et al. 2009). Thus, Christine Pintat from Inter-Parliamentary Union, Switzerland observed that,

> In some ways, quotas are a remedy to a disease, but in some cases, they can lead to another disease (CLRA 2008, p. 7).

This indicates that literature on the political participation of women has drawn a mixed response towards appreciating or criticising quota regulations. Before dealing with the criticisms, we will examine the reasons for the widespread recognition of the quota provisions throughout the world.

Reasons for the Wide Adoption of Political Gender Quotas

Despite variation in the features, modes and implementation of different political quotas, there is a striking similarity in terms of timing of their introduction. Only ten countries adopted gender quotas between 1930 and 1980 while twelve countries were added to the list between 1980 and

1995 but after the BPFA 1995, nearly 100 countries adopted different types of gender quotas (Krook 2004; Dahlerup 2006; Krook et al. 2009; Pandey & Ford 2011). In the first part of the next section, we will examine various reasons for the essentially adoption of gender quotas across the globe. In the second part, we identify some structural barriers that prevent women from entering into politics in various third world developing countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia, particularly South Asia.

Roles of Different Actors for Adoption of Gender Quotas

Squires (2007) observes that adoption of gender quotas by a large number of countries has made it a global phenomenon due to the roles played by women's organisations, political elites and international organisations especially donor agencies. Political involvement of women in the state, political parties and at the grassroots to achieve greater gender justice played an important role for the widespread adoption of gender quotas. Squires (2007, p. 28) asserts that quotas were adopted at an accelerated rate in countries 'where women's increased political representation is a high priority issue for the women's movement'. From the countries of high human development, the examples of Denmark, Sweden and Norway can be presented as cases where women pressurised governments to have 20-30% seats in parliament (Dahlerup & Friednall 2005). There are also instances where women's organisations from low human development countries of Africa (Malawi, Uganda, Zambia) led organised women's movements to influence their governments to adopt legal and constitutional measures for the political and economic uplift of women (ADF 2008).

Squires (2007, p. 28) considers the 'role of political elites in ushering in the global embrace of gender quotas' as the second important factor in the widespread adoption of gender quotas. She

maintains that political elites focused on the strategic advantages that might accrue to them from introducing such changes. Thus, the prime objective for political elites may not be the attainment of gender equality but to gain some democratic legitimacy in a period of democratic transition and economic development (Squires 2007). Some governments of the Middle East provide examples of the use of quota systems for their own purposes. By getting more of their chosen women into political offices governments can achieve two objectives: getting the token 'controllable' women into political assemblies while claiming they are in favour of promoting women's political participation. Araujo and Gracia (2006) are also of the view that countries adopt gender quotas during democratic transition which often offer opportunities for major change. Hughes (2007) notes that in the majority of cases, leaders of the non-democratic or post conflict societies in an effort to reconstruct and re-build national as well as global confidence adopt gender quotas. For instance, in Angola, Burundi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Liberia, South Africa, and other nation states, post-conflict settlements engaged women (or they refused to go away) and special measures were incorporated into electoral laws or party practices to increase women's representation in a short amount of time. In 2008 Angolan women took 37% of the seats in the first post conflict election, in which the electoral law specified candidate quotas (ADF 2008). South Africa's post conflict agreements saw special measures in electoral rules and party practices. In 1995 women were elected to 25% of the parliamentary seats. In 2005, proportion of women rose to 32.75%. In 2009, South Africa joined the 40+ club with women winning 43.5% of the total number of seats (IPU Website; Quota Project Website).

Other examples may be found among Latin American countries (Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Honduras), Asia (Pakistan, Iraq, Nepal) that adopted gender quotas either during the transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes or in a post-conflict situation. Squires

(2007) presents the example of Rwanda and Iraq. These two post-conflict countries made the transition to democracy with high levels of international peace-keeping forces and with high levels of international mediators promoting gender quotas in a move to demonstrate equality of opportunity for all citizens. In addition to the domestically driven motives of political leaders, countries like Rwanda, Iraq and Pakistan adopted gender quotas in politics because of international pressure (Squires 2007).

The role played by international organisations is the third factor for the wide adoption of political gender quotas presented by Squires (2007). On the recommendations of various international conventions, resolutions and pressure from the donor countries, some countries adopted gender quotas during constitutional reforms (Baines & Marin 2005). Afghanistan, Nepal, Bosnia and Herzegovina are examples. Squires (2007) further explains that international organisations interlink the adoption of gender quotas with democratisation, political equality and sustainable development and recommend governments to adopt political gender quotas through constitutional amendments. Krook (2009) is of the view that strong democracies and countries with high human development cannot be dictated to through international pressure for adopting constitutional quotas as compared to countries in transition or countries with less democratic values. USA for instance has only 17% women's representation in its congress. Political parties in USA may adopt voluntary party quotas but generally remain hostile to legislative and candidate quotas and consider it as against the principle of meritocracy. International organisations are not in a position to pressurise the USA to adopt gender quotas (Squires 2007; Krook 2006). Squires (2007, p. 30) taking account of the difficulty of pressurising rich and powerful countries, still maintains that

> International organisations have been highly receptive to feminist demands that the promotion of gender balanced decision making should be viewed as a central part of the development process.

Other Arguments Supporting the Wide Adoption of Political Gender Quotas

Dahlerup (2002), in a discussion of why it is important to promote gender-balanced decision making as the central part of development process, sets out four kinds of arguments to support this. The first is the 'justice argument' which says women comprise half of the world population and it is their right to have equal share in public representation (Rule 1994; Stokes 2005). Second is the 'experience argument' which entails women's having different biological and social experiences from men and these need to be represented. The third is the 'interest group argument' which portrays women and men as being different kinds of human beings who may have different interests. Thus, men may be inappropriate to be representatives for the interests and values of women. The fourth is the 'role model' argument where women leaders may act as role models for thousands of other women who may break the traditional barriers of being confined to household chores by following the behaviours of their leaders. Gender quotas are seen as a way to promote female solidarity, as some women who are elected act as positive and inspirational role models for other women. One of the reasons posited for so few women put themselves forward for election is a lack of female role models in politics. So, if quotas can help women get elected in the first place, then more women will follow. In this way, under-represented women will be encouraged to voice their opinions, and a greater diversity of voices will be heard. Dahlerup (2002) further argues that quotas are important to increase the human development of women and to get them their due share in the development process. She believes that this should not be viewed as a check on the development and empowerment of men.

Supporters of gender quotas say they are not discriminatory against men, as is argued by the critics. Quotas are not biased against men, if men and women have equal access to opportunities in every walk of life in all countries around the globe (Dahlerup 1998, 2002, 2006). Gender quotas, by reducing the gap between male and female members in public representative institutions make it easier for major political actors like political parties, who believe in equality of opportunities, to engage more women in active politics. Quotas are not device for favoring women but are actually filling the gap that is a pre-requisite for equal representation of all sections of society in a democratic system.

Rahat and Hazan (2001) argue that the basic purpose of a quota system is to provide a safe entrance for women into legislative assemblies and give training for their enhanced and extended roles in political decision making in the future. The quota system is neither biased against men nor does it act against meritocracy. By contrast, critics of the quota system argue that merit demands, 'let the best man win'. Dahlerup (2002, p. 8) questions this argument by asking 'is it always the best man who wins?' Here she points towards the economic resources of corrupt politicians, in most of the third world and developing countries, as compared to honest and upright politicians who lose elections because of insufficient economic resources to run their election campaigns effectively. A gender quota is a step for democratisation of political and decision-making institutions by permitting the safe entrance of women into political decision-making bodies by eliminating institutional and structural barriers that inhibit women's safe passage to empowerment and development.

To overcome structural barriers is the other important reason for the adoption of gender quotas in third world countries. To a large extent, women's participation in politics depends on structural factors such as the overall development of a country, the proportion of women in employment,

women's share in secondary and higher education, women's equal share of the tasks within the domestic sphere or women's equal socio-economic status in the societies where women's socio-economic status is not matched with that of men, there are structural barriers that restrict women's active involvement in politics. These structural barriers are not a universal phenomenon. These barriers vary with the different socio-economic, political, cultural, ethnic and religious factors of different countries around the globe. In many third world countries, socio-economic obstacles like extreme poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and a disproportionate share of domestic work by women as compared to men make it hard for women to be politically active (Frankl 2004).

In summary in countries where men and women are treated as relatively equals, the idea of recruiting women in politics through gender quotas may not be seen favourably. However, there are societies where differences between men and women are obvious, where there are structural barriers to the advancement of a particular group or community. In these circumstances quotas may be declared as legitimate options for the psychological and physical uplift of the affected groups. Before concluding the chapter, it is necessary to examine some of the criticisms of gender quotas.

Criticism of the Adoption of Political Gender Quotas

Within the framework of this research, it is important to state the obvious: that quota provisions do not solve all the problems for women in politics and that they may even create new ones. There are criticisms of the different quota systems that have come from a variety of actors and

are prescribed in a growing body of literature (Rai 2002; Htun & Jones 2002; Dahlerup 1998, 2002, 2006; Krook 2009; Stokes 2005; Goetz & Hassim 2003; Hassim 2003, 2008)

The most strongly-voiced opposition to gender quotas comes from those who claim that gender quotas are discriminatory against men and therefore undemocratic: a man would have won the seat were it not for the quota, an act which violates the principle of fairness inherent in a liberal democracy (Dahlerup 1998, 2002, 2006; Krook 2009). Even if the measure put in place is designed to create a more equal playing field, by tampering with the selection of candidates or make-up of elected officials, gender quotas are seen to infringe on the democracy that they are supposedly designed to enhance. Consequently, critics see quotas as taking away the freedom of choice from voters by mandating a certain percentage of women as candidates or elected representatives.

Opponents of quotas argue that the quota measures result in a less competent legislature because the women who are elected or selected are not as qualified as the men who would have been elected if no quotas were in place. A politician's prime responsibility is to perform his or her job within the political body, and it is most important to have a person (be it male or female) who accomplishes that task. For that reason, so-called 'quota women' are seen to lack value in their role as politicians, making their appointments almost counter-productive. Often, this idea translates to the candidates themselves: women who do not wish to be elected only because they are women, but rather because of their skills.

> Quotas are opposed by feminists as demeaning to women, rejected by elites due to concerns about electoral competition, blocked by guarantees by other groups and obstructed by the international actors as a violation of electoral best practices (Krook 2009, p. 26).

Opponents of quotas argue that women under quota regulations are nominated not because of their qualifications but only because of their gender. Because of this mindset, women elected through a quota system are often less respected and less able to wield their legislative power because they are not perceived by their male counterparts (or their constituents) as equal or competent. It is not only male politicians and political parties with patriarchal trends that have critical views about gender quotas, there are still large numbers of women politicians and women's organisations around the globe criticising quotas as discriminatory against ambitious women by putting barriers on the 'desire for a struggle to achieve something'.

Gilger (2009) in her research on gender quota systems in Middle East interviewed, Falak Jamani—the first female politician to win a seat in a national election against her male competitor in 2007 in Jordan. Falak was opposed to the quota system, as she believed that women had the potential to achieve anything if they have dedication without any artificial support. She was of the opinion that women selected through quotas belonged to influential political families and lacked the abilities to be representatives of the masses. Many other critics declare such women as a mere vote bank for their parties as 'proxy women' or 'tokens' (Dahlerup 1998, 2002, 2006; Htun & Jones 2002; Krook 2006, 2009; Hassim, 2003). Nanivadekar (2003) argues that a top down implementation of gender quotas without capacity building of women for new roles creates a vacuum instead of a space for women. These, women in the absence of the knowledge of functioning of political institutions, will merely serve the interests of political elites or their families. Nanivadekar asserts that the participation of such women in politics is in fact a patriarchal participation (Frankl 2004).

In some cases, quotas have helped the female relatives of traditional male politicians. In Pakistan, more than 50% of females nominated in the elections of 2002 and 2007 belonged to

influential political families at national and provincial levels rather than women who had developed constituencies of their own (Bari 2009). Thus, quotas bring into question the legitimacy of the women elected and thus undermines the changes they hope to bring to a political body.

Summary

This chapter has described political gender quotas, their types, reasons for their adoption in a large number of countries across the globe to increase women's political representation in elected assemblies, and the arguments for and against the adoption of such quotas. While, there has been a mixed response towards gender quotas, it can be argued that against the critics, their widespread adoption is an acknowledgement of the dominance of the 'for' position. Type and design of quotas are important in allowing women to succeed in obtaining representation. In political systems that allow party leaders and incumbents influence in determining the ballot order of candidates and the gender allocation within a party list, there can be disadvantages for women. Quotas are often politically contentious with various parties or groups seeking to undermine them. Moreover, the low proportion of female legislators in many countries is not necessarily a consequence of an absence of willing female candidates. Women have responded, across the globe, to opportunities afforded by quotas to run for, and assume, elected office. The barriers to women getting elected appear to be persistent negative attitudes towards female leaders and a (possibly linked) failure by political parties and systems to promote female candidates. There is strong evidence that voters' implicit attitudes and willingness to vote for women can strongly and positively be changed by persistent exposure to female leaders. So it is possible that, in some circumstances, quotas can be an effective temporary measure that will

facilitate the erosion of the negative attitudes that act as barriers to representation in the long term.

Political gender quotas were introduced as a reformative process at global level. They aim to give women equal access to politics with men using the argument that women are equal citizens and therefore should share, equally with men in public decision making positions, otherwise, there would be a 'representation deficit' (Tremblay 2008, p. 3). To do away with this representation deficit all the international conventions and regulations recommend the adoption of gender quotas as a temporary measure until an appropriate level of women's representation can be established but gender quotas obviously do not have the magical powers to change overnight the situation in favour of women. As Brigitta Dahl, speaker of the Swedish Parliament in (1998) remarked:

> One cannot deal with the problem of female representation by a quota system alone. Political parties, the educational system, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, churches all must take responsibilities within their own organizations to systematically promote women's participation from the bottom up. This will take time. It will not happen over night or in one year or in five years, it will take one or two generations to realize significant change (Dahlerup 2002, p. 7).

3. Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment

This chapter provides the context for this research by examining gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment as development policies through a review of the international research and development literature on these topics. The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part provides an explanation of the need for adopting gender-sensitive policies and their changing orientation as part of the development process. This involves the conceptual transformation from Women in Development (WID) to Women and Development (WAD) that eventually led to Gender and Development (GAD) and Gender Mainstreaming. Understanding this conceptual transformation will enable the reader to appreciate the complexity of gender equality policies both in terms of politics and as a development strategy. The second part of the chapter explains the concepts of power, empowerment and women's political empowerment. Also identified are various factors inhibiting women's access to political empowerment, such as patriarchy, male dominance, violence against women and the tradition of family politics. Active participation of any gender in any institution is not possible without knowing the character and history of the institution and the roles of the actors involved in the process. The third section of the chapter reviews the notion of historical institutionalism and the roles of actors in the design and implementation of policies, as they relate to gender and politics. The last section presents analytical framework for this research as derived from the literature review in chapters two and three.

WID, WAD and GAD Approaches and Gender Mainstreaming

Since the beginning of the 1970s, the term 'women in development' (WID) became common currency both inside and outside academic settings. But while WID, is understood to mean the integration of women into global processes of economic, political and social growth, there is often confusion about the meaning of two more acronyms, WAD (Women and Development) and GAD (Gender and Development). This section begins with an examination of meanings and assumptions embedded in WID, WAD and GAD, and gender mainstreaming as an approach of GAD. It then looks at the extent to which differing views of the relationship between gender and development have influenced research, policy making and international agency thinking since the start of 1970s. As a starting point, it is imperative to differentiate between sex and gender and to clarify 'women's status as others' , as this will enable the reader to comprehend the terms used in the explanation of WID, WAD and GAD and gender mainstreaming.

Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the biological apparatus, the male and the female - the chromosomal, chemical and anatomical organisation. Gender refers to the meaning that is attached to those differences within a culture (Baden & Goetz 1998). Sex is male and female; gender is masculinity and femininity - what it means to be man or woman (Kimmel 2007). Sex is biologically defined while gender is socially constructed. Sex is universal, unchanging and determined by birth while gender differentiates between and within cultures. Gender takes into account variables that differentiate between roles, responsibilities, requirements, opportunities and constraints (Baden & Reeves 2000). Connell (1987) calls gender a process and phenomenon within sociality. It has its own particular features and characteristics which are quite independent from the biological process.

Gender is one of the central organising principles around which social life revolves (Kimmel 2007; Derbyshire 2002)

Sex differences only reveal something closely related to the bodies of males and females. For example, medical research generally speaks about the particularities of biological sex (Connell 1987). On the other hand, gender differences describe the interactions of these biological bodies in society (Nobelius 2004; Nussbaum 1993). Gender is actually an inherent part of the manner in which all societies are organised (Gittins 1992). As gender is articulated in social relationships and these relationships prevail in every society, gender inequalities are generated (Orlof 1996). Sharma (2004) states that the term gender refers to both women and men but in general recognises that women, in most cases, are in the disadvantageous position from prevailing inequalities and discriminations created by the accepted norms and traditions around the world. Oakley (1997, p. 30) further elaborates that

> Too much academic writing has tended to imply that gender is an attribute that only women possess: gender was invented to help explain women's position: men neither wonder about theirs nor need to explain it.

The values and traditions in most of the developing countries have been shaped in such a way that men inherently are in a stronger position than women (Gittins 1992). This can be further elaborated from the following explanation of 'women as others' as is described in sociological, psychological and political literature.

Women as Others

Much sociological, psychological and political literature identifies women 'as others' with reference to men (Antonis 1981; Connell 1987; Gittins 1992; Orlof 1996; Nobelius 2004;

Kimmel 2007). Ali (2002) articulates that men are represented in literature as individuals instinctively possessing some natural rights. Women on the other hand have been identified not as individuals but as members of men's households, along with their descendants more or less under men's domination. The individuality and status of women are derived from their particular roles as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. Men on the other hand are not recognised in relation to women but as independent citizens and workers. The particular gender of men is not taken into account; they represent humanity to which women are others. This is expressed by Beauvoir (1949) as follows:

> Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. ... She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; ….He is the subject, he is the absolute – she is the other. (Beauvoir 1949 as in Mcdowell & Pringle 1992, p. 3)

McDowell and Pringle (1992) indicate a set of contrasting word couples. These are, for instance, one and other, public and private, work and home, rationality and emotionality, culture and nature, mind and body, autonomy and dependence. The former parts of these categories are positively valued and are associated with men while the latter are negatively valued and are associated with women. Such an outlook, in the past established the superiority of males in every walk of life even although societies of many developing countries still believe in the same ideology. The age-old male supremacy over utilisation of external resources was, however challenged by Boserup's theory of the 'sexual division of labour', presented in 1970 (Boserup 1970). The theory initiated discussion among scholars and policy makers and led to the introduction of the term 'Women in Development' (WID).

WID, WAD and GAD Approaches

Publication of Boserup's *Women's Role in Economic Development* in 1970 proved to be the turning point for the rise of women in development discourse (Moser 1989). The book highlighted what a growing body of empirical evidence was pointing at – women not only fulfilled reproductive roles but also performed productive ones. Boserup, for the first time in development research, took economic data on agricultural productivity and disaggregated it along gender lines (Woodford 2004; Tiessen 2007; Moser 2005). She concluded that women could and often did work longer hours than men in producing both domestic and cash crops in addition to fulfilling their reproductive and household roles (Woodford 2004; Moser 2005; Subrahmaninan 2004; Standing 2004).

Boserup (1970) concluded that in thinly populated regions where shifting agriculture was practiced, women tended to do the majority of agricultural work. In densely populated regions, where ploughs and other simple technologies were used, men tended to do more of the agricultural work (Razavi & Miller 1995; Rathgeber 1990). Finally, in areas of intensive irrigation-based cultivation, both men and women shared agricultural tasks. She showed that women are an essential element of the agrarian economy and had long been ignored in the design of development interventions (Rathgeber 1990; Cornwall et al. 2004; Baden & Reeves 2000; Razavi & Miller 1995). As a result of this and other related work, it was slowly acknowledged by development institutions through the persistence of liberal feminists throughout the 1970s that women were or should be important actors in international development and need to be included in the design of projects and programmes concerned with economic growth and development (Cornwall et al. 2007; Bailey et al. 2000). Boserup's work was remarkable in that it was based on analysis of data and evidence which had long been available to social scientists and development

planners, but she was the first to systematically use gender as an independent variable in her analysis (Hartmann 1981; El Bushra 2000).

The term 'WID' started to be utilised by American liberal feminists in early 1970s as part of their strategy to bring the new evidence and analysis generated by Boserup to the attention of policy makers (Jahan 1995). This led to the advocacy of legal and administrative changes to ensure that women would be better integrated into economic systems (Jill 2000; Mukhopadhyay 2004; Rai 2002). The feminist advocates placed primary emphasis on social equality and on the development of strategies and action programs aimed at minimising the disadvantages of women in the productive sector and ending discrimination against them. Prior to the 1970s, it was generally believed that industrialisation (commonly equated with modernisation) would lead to improved standards of living for all in developing countries (Goetz 1997; McMichael 1996). It was argued that through massive expansion of education systems, stocks of well-trained workers and managers would emerge. This in turn would enable the transformation of static, essentially agrarian societies into industrialised and modernised ones. With the growth of the economies of these countries, the benefits of modernisation, such as better living conditions, higher wages, more education and improved health services would trickle down to all segments of the society equally including men and women (Sharma 2004; Jaquette & Studt 2006; Goetz & Sandler 2007; Standing 2004). But by the start of 1970s, the predictions of such modernisation theory were questioned by many researchers and policy makers as men were reaping the fruits of modernisation much more than women (Nowottny 1980; Moser 1993; Razavi & Miller 1995).

It was argued in the 1970s that the relative position of women had, in fact, improved very little over the previous two decades in developing countries (Boserup 1970; Razavi & Miller 1995; Reddock 2000; Anderson 1993). New technologies had been introduced into the agricultural

sector but they usually were directed at men rather than women. In the formal industrial sector, women were often relegated to the lowest-paying, most monotonous and sometimes health-impairing jobs, a condition due in part to their low levels of education, but also due to the roles assigned to them as supplementary rather than principal wage earners (Lim 1981) Apart from this, women were less likely to benefit from the surge of educational expansion (Ostegard 1992). Enrolment figures, especially at the tertiary level, tended to be lower for females due to their engagement, mostly in reproductive activities. For the first time in the 1970s, these issues were examined in 'detail to provide evidence to push for equality of opportunity' for women (Momsen 2004; Neimanis 2002).

Under the WID approach, for the first time, the position of women in various sectors of the economy was studied separately from that of men. The recognition that women's experience of development and of societal change differed from that of men was institutionalised and it became legitimate for research to focus specifically on women's experiences and perceptions (Pearson & Jackson 1998). But from the mid to late 1970s, the WID approach was found to be at odds with other research trends in the social sciences. Rather than examining why women had fared less well from development strategies, the WID approach focussed only on how women could better be integrated into ongoing development initiatives. The WID approach avoided questioning the sources and nature of women's subordination and oppression and focussed on advocacy for more equal participation in education, employment and other areas of inequality. The WID approach also tended to be ahistorical and overlooked the impact and influence of class, race and culture (Razavi & Miller 1995; Ostergaard 1992). This phenomenon led to the transformation from WID into WAD (Women and Development).

The WAD approach emerged in the second half of the 1970s. It started from the position that women always had been part of development processes and that they did not suddenly appear in the early 1970s as the result of the insights and intervention strategies of a few scholars and development agency personnel (Jaquette 1982). The WAD perspective focused on the relationship between women and development processes rather than purely on strategies for the integration of women into development. Its point of departure from WID was that women always had been integrated into their societies and that the work they did both inside and outside the household was central to the maintenance of those societies, but that this integration served primarily to sustain existing international structures of inequality (Razavi & Miller 1995; Ostergaard 1992). The WAD perspective recognised that third world men who did not have elite status also had been adversely effected by the structure of the inequalities within the international system but little analytical attention had been given to the social relations of gender within and between classes (Jaquette 1982; Cornwall et al. 2004).

WAD offered a more critical view of women's position than did WID but it also failed to undertake a full analysis of the relationship between patriarchy, differing modes of production and women's subordination and oppression. The WAD perspective assumed that women's position would improve if and when international structures became more equitable. WAD identified the underrepresentation of women in economic, political and social structures as a problem which could be solved by intervention strategies rather than by more fundamental shifts in the social relations of gender. In other words, WAD placed emphasis on income generating activities of women, without taking into account the gendered aspects of social relations (Razavi & Miller 1995; Ostergaard 1992; Momsen 2004).

WID and WAD interventions over-focused on the productive role of women and paid little attention to women's reproductive roles and their position in the household (Griffin 1987; Chafetz 1990; Jill 2000; Kabeer 1996). The work of women in the home – the labour invested in family maintenance, including childbearing and rearing, housework, care of the ill and elderly – were considered to have no productive value and therefore outside of the scope of development interventions aimed at increasing the income-generating potential of women in more formal 'productive' sectors (Oskamp & Costanzo 1993; Peterson & Runyan 1999). Furthermore, by ignoring the work women performed in the domestic sphere – as well as by labelling it as non-productive – WID and WAD ignored questioning the sexual division of labour. As a result, development interventions often failed to make real differences to the lives of women (Nussbaum et al. 1993, Macdonald 1994). In many cases, they only increased the burden of work and responsibility on women, as they failed to examine and challenge the root causes of the poor position of women in the household, the community and wider society. Out of these criticisms of WID and WAD the concept of 'Gender and Development' (GAD) was developed and offered as an alternative approach for development practitioners.

GAD is currently seen as an important model within international development for promoting social justice and equality between men and women. GAD, unlike WID and WAD, does not concentrate its analytical attention on development policy and practice exclusively on women. Rather, it examines the social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities and expectations to women and men (Moser & Moser 2005; Hijab & Lewis 2004). GAD is less about the integration of women into development and more about the redefinition of development itself, both in terms of its aims and the methods it employs. It is about creating a development model that attempts to recognise relational sites of inequality and

transform them, recasting the value of masculine and feminine identities and roles in society (NORAD 2000; NORAD 2007).

GAD finds its theoretical roots in socialist feminism and has bridged the gap left by the modernisation theorists, linking the relations of production to the relations of reproduction and taking into account all aspects of women's lives. Socialist feminists have identified the social construction of production and reproduction as the basis of women's oppression and have focussed attention on the social relations of gender, questioning the validity of roles which have been ascribed to both women and men in different societies (Jaquette & Studt 2006; ADB 2003; ADB 2006). GAD puts greater emphasis than previous approaches on the participation of the state in promoting women's emancipation, seeing it as the duty of the state to provide some of the social services which women in many countries have provided on a private and individual basis (Ghosh 1999).

The GAD approach establishes women as agents of change rather than as passive recipients of development (Wendoh & Wallace 2005; Elson 2003). It stresses the need for women to organise themselves for more effective political voice. GAD recognises the importance of both class solidarities and class distinctions but it argues that the ideology of patriarchy operates within and across classes to oppress women differentially. Consequently, socialist feminists and researchers working within the GAD perspective are exploring both the connections among and the contradictions of gender, class, race and development (Elson 2000; Razavi & Miller 1995).

The GAD approach goes further than WID or WAD in questioning the underlying assumptions of current social, economic and political structures. A GAD perspective leads not only to the design of intervention and affirmative action strategies which ensures that women are better

integrated into ongoing development efforts (True 2003; Squires 2007), it also leads, inevitably, to a fundamental re-examination of social structures and institutions and, ultimately, to the loss of power of entrenched elites (Broussine & Fox 2003; Squires 2007). It is difficult to implement GAD approach as a whole in any particular field due to its wide ranging scope (Squires 1999; Smyth 2007). However, from 1995 onwards, a more policy-oriented outgrowth of GAD has been developed and applied in different sectors. This is called 'gender mainstreaming'.

Gender Mainstreaming

Although the term gender mainstreaming was first utilised in international literature in 1985 during the *UN Third World Conference of Women* in Nairobi (Council of Europe 1998), it was not until the *1995 UN Fourth World Conference of Women* in Beijing that gender mainstreaming was recognised as an important strategy for promoting a GAD vision of equitable social change and challenging the inequality faced by women across the world (Moser 2005; Woodford 2004; Tiessen 2007; Behning & Pascual 2001; Walby 2004, 2005).

Gender mainstreaming is seen as a process of organisational change in development institutions that aims to develop the use of GAD analysis in all the plans, programmes and projects of those institutions in order to achieve development that creates gender equitable social change (Moser 2005; Jaquette & Staudt 2006; Hannan 2003; Hannan 2004; Goetz & Sandler 2007) Gender mainstreaming seeks to institutionalise equality by incorporating gender sensitive practices and norms in the processes, structures and environment of public policy (USAID 2002; Akerker 2005; Daly 2005; Prugl & Lustgarten 2006).

Mainstreaming gender implies the identification of gaps where interventions and services have not reached both men and women in an equitable way (Razavi 1997; CIDA 1999; Goetz 2003).

Gender mainstreaming is a holistic approach, meaning that the entire spectrum of all human activities is taken into account. This indicates that it is not enough to address areas that traditionally lie within female spheres of activity, such as health and education. All aspects of human development need to be included in a specific gender approach. Thus, areas like, infrastructure development, economic policy, political engagement as well as health and education have to come under scrutiny in such a way that women are enabled to participate on an equal footing with men in all social and economic activities (Rao & Stuart 1997; Rao & Keheller 2003; Kabeer 2003; MacDonald 2003; Mehra & Gupta 2006).

The UN Fourth World Conference of Women (FWCW) in Beijing (BPFA) made recommendations for all the member states to carry out necessary steps to improve the status and condition of women, The conference recommended all member states to introduce affirmative measures or gender quotas in all policies as an additional measure to achieve gender equality and this was named as gender mainstreaming (Squires 2007). UNESC (1997) defines such gender mainstreaming in the following way:

> Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of accessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, and programmes, in all areas and in all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is gender equality (ILO Website).

United Nations (1997) further established three guiding principles for mainstreaming gender perspectives around the globe. First, there is a general assumption that gender neutrality should not be applied. Rather gender differences in all areas of activities can be easily identified. Second, every possible effort should be made to extend women's participation at all levels of

decision-making. It should be achieved through the introduction of appropriate mechanisms and their institutionalisation. Third, the introduction and implementation of gender mainstreaming must be accompanied by clear political will and the availability of adequate resources from all possible sources (UN 2000, 2001, 2002; UNDP 2003, 2006). However, gender mainstreaming is not meant to replace the targeted women-specific policies and positive legislation. They still have a place in development. All member states and development organisations have generally agreed to the concept and principles of gender mainstreaming introduced by the United Nations for the uplift of women and the achievement of equality in all relevant activities.

Besides these guiding principles, Prugal and Lustgarten (2006) have noted that nearly all interpretations of gender mainstreaming include three critical elements: First, gender mainstreaming integrates gender considerations into organisational processes; second, it incorporates concerns of women and men into policies, projects and programmes of a particular organisation, and third, it presents equality between men and women as its ultimate goal. Based on the guiding principles of the United Nations and conceptual interpretations of the term 'gender mainstreaming' by various authors, the political support gained by the concept is unprecedented. Gender mainstreaming represents a substantial opportunity for gender advocates and feminist policy makers, as it has become both a legitimate and authoritative concept at a transnational level in development (Kabeer 1994; Walby 2005; Stearns 2003). Furthermore, the concept of gender mainstreaming is now in widespread use within much development literature, and is frequently a condition of donor funding (Boyce 2002; Aasen 2006; Chambers 2005; Mosse 2003). Gender mainstreaming, in this respect, is a key contemporary policy opportunity for feminists as it has the potential (due to its omnipresence in global development discourse) to

make a significant contribution to achieving a feminist vision of equitable social change in development interventions.

Gender mainstreaming, as a concept, is multi-dimensional and bi-faceted. Researchers and policy makers address the dimensions, which they perceive as most pertinent to fulfil their purposes. For instance, policy for achieving gender mainstreaming at the political level for a particular community in a country or a particular group in an organisation involves multi-dimensions such as political will to achieve the goals, determination of the community concerned and changes in social structures (Daly 2005; Esplen 2006; Kabeer 2003; Pradhan 2004). They may be addressed in different ways. For example, advocates may choose to set political determination in an appropriate direction. Determination of community concerned and changes in social structures may follow in the next phases. Most authors on gender mainstreaming rate political will as the most important dimension to achieve the desired results (SIDA 1997; Kardam 1995; Mikkelson et al. 2002; Ferree & Gamson 2003). Gender mainstreaming is political on account of its desired outcome because it challenges the mainstream development practices of particular countries or organisations. Once the multi-dimensions of gender mainstreaming are prioritised, the next step is to unveil the two faces of gender mainstreaming.

The two faces of gender mainstreaming, as mentioned above, are the internal face of institutional change and the external face of policy implementation and social change (Parpart et al. 2002). Policies involving gender mainstreaming are implemented through two key actors. First is the practitioner that may be an institution, organisation or a country, while second are the people for whom the policies are primarily concerned (nations, communities or individuals) (European Commission 2001; Eveline & Bacchi 2005). The focus of research and action for each community or individual is dependent on the particular aspect of gender mainstreaming. For

example, gender mainstreaming policies may be prepared to achieve political or economic empowerment of a certain community in an organisation, institution or country. This process of unfolding dimensions and faces of gender mainstreaming makes gender mainstreaming a lengthy process and unlike WID and WAD, communities do not necessarily get immediate or short-term benefits.

The gender mainstreaming approach is not as optimistic as WID and WAD in terms of financial benefits. WID and WAD traditionally helped women to organise into collective groupings for productive purposes to increase their bargaining power in the economic system and to accrue more earning opportunities. Gender mainstreaming as an implementing tool of the GAD approach is not opposed to such strategies, but it also stresses the need for both men's and women's self-organisation in order to increase their power within the economic and political systems (Mukhopadhyay & Singh 2007). Gender mainstreaming, as an instrument of GAD, increases the general awareness of the importance of gender equality, not only for economic gains but also with respect to decision-making, power and empowerment.

Gender mainstreaming recognises that existing structures are not gender neutral but favour one sex or others in a variety of ways. With gender mainstreaming, came the call for policies that accommodate a diversity of circumstances accepting that being male or female have implications for a person's ability to compete equally. This is an antidote to apparently gender neutral policies that can in fact reinforce divisions and consequently further disadvantage for women or men. It is argued that women are in a more disadvantageous position than men, particularly in developing countries and that societal structures in developing countries are shaped in such a way that to perpetuate this inequality. Women, under normal circumstances are not in a position to compete with men (Squires 2007; Dawson 2005; NORAD 2005; Hassim 2009). Quotas and other measure

aiming at an increased level of women's political participation are regarded as means towards equality of result. Therefore, gender mainstreaming visualises gender quotas as an important incubator for ideas and strategies that can be transferred to mainstream interventions and to create an empowering space for women (Charlier et al. 2007). Many authors argue that gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment are complementary as gender mainstreaming must be carried out in a manner which is empowering for women (Elson 2003; Dahlerup 2005; Squires 2007; Krook 2009).

Power and Empowerment

Gender mainstreaming imparts a sense of power within the communities or individuals concerned. Various authors, policy makers and researchers associated with gender mainstreaming identify particular dimensions, focis or objectives of gender mainstreaming policy as empowerment. For instance, if the focus of a gender mainstreaming policy is on economic or political uplift of a certain community in a society or institution, it is commonly called economic or political empowerment. Empowerment is an aspect of power.

Traditional meaning of power is 'a force exercised by individuals or groups' (Moguire 1992, p. 3). Ardent in Lukes (1974) classic work on power defines it as:

> Power corresponds to human ability, not just to act but to act in correct. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is in 'power' we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. The moment the group, from which the power originated to begin with disappears, 'his power' also vanishes (Ardent in Luke 1974, p. 28)

Ardent says that power is far from being the means to an end. It actually enables a group of people or individuals to think and act in terms of the 'means end category' (Ardent in Lukes 1974, p. 29).

Various authors on power in the literature speak about the negative and positive values of power. Power can be exercised both positively and negatively. However, Lukes (1974) emphasises that power is always in the positive direction, because if it is exercised negatively, it no longer remains power but is abuse of power. Thus, power is both the source of oppression in its abuse and the source of emancipation in its use (Moguire 1992; Radtke 1994; Townsend et al. 1999). Power is both productive and oppressive for creating or constraining the social practices of gender. It is contended in this thesis that gender mainstreaming is related to the positive use of power against its current negative practice as manifested within particular sets of power relations (Kimmel 2007). These power relations are strengthened or weakened with different types of power depending upon the extent to which these types are followed either positively or negatively.

Power can be categorised into four types i.e. power over, power to, power with and power within (Kimmel 2007). 'Power over' is exerted over someone or permits someone to be guided. It creates a reciprocal relationship of domination and subordination. It is the process of acquisition of influence by one person or group over another person or group to get something done with or without their will. The second category, the 'power to', involves someone being authoritative and having the capacity to make important decisions. It involves the ability to control the means of production and distribution of resources. It is potentially creative, enabling and involving a full range of human capabilities and potential but could be used negatively for suppression (Kimmel 2007).

The third category, 'power with', is the capacity to achieve with others what one cannot achieve alone. It is associated with social and political norms to consult, shield or preserve some common social cause or individual or collective political rights such as the pursuit of gender equity. *The Oxford Gender Training Manual (2007)* defines 'power within' as the spiritual strength and uniqueness that dwell in every human being. It involves the power of identity, self-esteem, assertiveness and self-awareness. It is about the internal strengths of an individual that can impinge on another's life. These four levels of power can be combined together to achieve empowerment (Charlier et al. 2007; Rowlands 1997; Townsend et al. 1999)

Empowerment

Empowerment is a state of being where people partially or fully possess all the four categories of power. They have the power to guide others, to govern others, to discuss and consult with others and to rediscover themselves with the power of self esteem and self awareness. People know the boundaries within which they are free to work and the boundaries are appropriate according to their experience, maturity and situation (Dew 1997; Kabeer 2001). In the literature, the term 'empowerment' has been being utilised in relation to women more often after the Beijing Platform for Action 1995. In the past, the word development was being preferred over empowerment. For instance, instead of women's political empowerment or economic development, authors of the relevant literature used to call it as women's political development, or women's economic development. Wide adoption of the term 'empowerment' has made it a motherhood term that is unobjectionable and supportable by most institutions, development agencies and organisations (Parpart et al. 2002).

Empowerment can take place in a hierarchy of different levels - individual, household, community and societal (Dew 1997; WB 1997). It may be enhanced through supporting tools (e.g. exposure to new activities) and removing inhibiting factors (e.g. lack of skills and resources). Anthropologists and social scientists fighting against poverty perceive it as a tool in the hands of the poor to change their destiny. Human resource and business managers visualise it as a means of increasing output and productivity by the most economic utilisation of available resources while development agencies, organisations and institutions consider it as a way to improve development indicators (Parpart et al. 2002). Despite the wide adoption of the term 'empowerment' in the development literature, the reality may be quite different and can even be 'endullment', the opposite of empowerment as identified by Dew (1997). In order to understand the meaning of empowerment with relation to gender mainstreaming, it is imperative to compare it with endullment as it will enable the comparison of the empirical findings in the last part of the thesis on an empowerment-endullment continuum relating to political representation and decision-making. Table 3.1 draws a clear distinction between empowerment and endullment:

Table 3.1: Empowerment as Compared to 'what it is not' i.e. Endullment

Empowerment	Endullment
People are involved in making decisions	People are told what to do
People have boundaries that are appropriate	Boundaries are too confining
People track their own performance	Feedback only comes from an authority figure, if at all
People have a sense of ownership about their work and organisation	People's ownership is very limited
People are proud of their work and organisation	People are apathetic about their work and their organisation

Source: (Dew 1997, pp 6-7)

Table 3.1 describes what is required to be empowered and what is otherwise endulled. Empowerment requires involvement in decision-making processes. It demands people feel proud of their work, can track their own performances and they possess a sense of ownership of what they deliver. Above all, empowerment expects people to have a clear understanding of their limits and that they should not exceed their limits. On the other hand, endullment is where people work half heartedly, do not feel pride in what they deliver, have a little sense of ownership, are unable to keep a record of their trajectories and do not have clear boundaries.

> To be empowered is to rise above all the barriers, to do things you have never imagined. Above all, it is to overcome the fear of doing things.....to live empowerment is to get on changing yourself every day (Mercado 1997 as in Townsend et al. 1999, p. 33).

Women's Empowerment

As this research deals with women's empowerment in politics, it is important to describe how the literature views this phenomenon. Until the start of the 1980s, it was generally assumed in the literature that, 'Where power is, women are not' (Nowotny 1980, p. 147). But after the Beijing Platform for Action 1995, development organisations, policy makers and researchers became more interested in discussing various aspects of women's empowerment. It is important to mention here that various authors often intermingle the terms 'gender equality', 'gender equity' and 'women's empowerment'. While these can be seen at separate concepts, they are closely related and often overlap in practice.

In a policy research report by the World Bank (2004) the term 'gender equality' was defined in terms of equality under the law, equality of opportunity (including equality of rewards for work and equality in access to human capital and other productive resources that enable opportunity), and equality of voice (the ability to influence and contribute to the development process). Gender

equality implies equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognising their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources. Gender equity recognises that women and men have different needs, preferences, and interests and that equality of outcomes may necessitate different treatment of men and women (Reeves & Baden 2000; WB 2001).

Women's empowerment, on the other hand is defined as the process by which women take control and ownership of their lives through expansion of their choices. It is the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability has previously been denied (Kabeer 2001). Kabeer's definition is especially appealing because it contains two elements which help distinguish empowerment from other closely related concepts such as gender equality .First is the idea of process, or change from a condition of disempowerment and the notion of second is of human agency and choice, which she qualifies by saying that empowerment implies choices made from the easily available alternatives and without involving high costs.

The first essential element of empowerment that distinguishes it from gender equality to gender equity is that it is a process (Oxaal & Baden 1997; Kabeer 2001; Townsend et al. 1999). Neither of the other concepts covers a progression from one state (gender inequality) to another (gender equality). The second element of empowerment that distinguishes it from other concepts is agency—in other words, women themselves must be significant actors in the process of change that is being described or measured (Mehra 1997; Sen 1993; Malpas & Kakiba 2007). Thus, hypothetically there could be an improvement in indicators of gender equality, but unless the intervening processes involved women as agents of that change rather than merely as its recipients, it cannot be considered as empowerment.

Women's empowerment is about adding to women's power: having the right to express life choices; having the ability to control things; having the capacity to make social choices; having the capability to design and create from a women's perspective; and having the privilege to be recognised and respected by other members of the society on an equal footing (Griffen 1987; Malhotra & Schutle 2009).

Empowerment of women cannot occur in a vacuum; men must also be brought along in the process of change. It should not be seen as a zero sum game where gains by women automatically imply losses for men. There are gains from women's empowerment for men, families, communities and society at large (Stevens 2007; Hannan 2003). Women's empowerment may contribute towards financial stability in a family. Men who are sole breadwinners in many developing countries, especially in South Asia and Middle East may find their life partners (women) sharing their load which may enhance their quality of life. Children can have educated mothers who may bring them up in a more informed way and communities or societies may head towards prosperity when most of its members combine their efforts and skills to achieve shared development objectives. This entails, men, communities and societies working together for a better future. Women's empowerment therefore challenges deeply held personal biases, attitudes, and practices (Akerker 2005; Kabeer et al. 2008). An important question arises here of how women's empowerment with a particular focus can be initiated for a specific country? How can significant policy actors be persuaded of the need to introduce women's political empowerment or women's economic empowerment. Are there any criteria that can measure where women of different countries are lacking in a comparative perspective? World Economic Forum has developed criteria through an initiative started in 2006 by comparing gender data of 127 to 134 countries around the world and titled it as 'global gender gap'. It is

composed of the disparities between women and men, especially as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural or economic attainments or attitudes (Hausmann et al. 2010). The data presented in the reports of World Economic Forum (from 2006-2011) quantify the magnitude of gender-based disparities around the globe and suggest measures to reduce them.

The World Economic Forum[3] (Hausmann et al. 2010) uses five points criteria for measuring the global gender gap on women's empowerment based on the recommendations of UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women). The criteria include, economic participation, economic opportunity, educational attainment, health and well being, and political empowerment.

The World Economic Forum (Hausmann et al. 2010) describes economic participation as the first step towards women's empowerment as women's numerical increase in all types of work is not only an important step towards raising household incomes but also may help in lowering the disproportionately high levels of poverty among women. Elson (2003) says that economic participation of women is not limited to their economic activities but should also focus on the issue of equal remuneration with men for equal amounts of work. Ghosh (1999) describes women's economic opportunity in the form of quality of women's economic involvement as the foremost factor for their economic empowerment. Even in developed countries, this has emerged as a major issue where women can get employment with relative ease but in many cases, the women's job market has more unskilled and higher levels of low-paid jobs compared to men with little chance of vertical mobility and improved wages. The occupations that are often associated with women are generally labelled as 'feminised professions' include childcare,

[3] The World Economic Forum updates the global ranking on gender gaps every year. It can be reached at http://www.weforum.org/

elderly care, primary teaching, nursing, and sale assistants and baristas. These occupations carry modest scope of advancement and are mostly associated with horizontal occupational segregation.

Educational attainment and women's health comprise the next criteria that play a pivotal role towards women's empowerment (DFID 2000, Carlos & Zahidi 2005). Education plays the most pivotal role in determining the choices of women's lives from opening up numerous employment opportunities to giving more control over their lives. Upward mobility of women in economic and political participation is not possible without educational attainment and their access to sufficient nutrition, healthcare and reproductive facilities (Dolan et al. 2006, Walby 2004).

Women's Political Empowerment

Political empowerment is another important criterion to determine women's overall empowerment. Literature on women's empowerment awards political empowerment of women the highest importance. Various authors suggest that the process of women's empowerment starts from their social independence that finally leads to economic and political empowerment. (Carlos & Zahidi 2005; Hawk & Wynhoven 2011; Shroff 2010; Hausmann et al. 2010). An important component of women's political empowerment is their participation in elected assemblies at national and local levels (Elgstrom 2000). But political empowerment can entail more than this. Singh (2005) states that women's participation in the political process in whatever form is a key aspect of empowerment. For instance, for a woman for whom it was a challenge to attend meetings, her presence at the meetings is her empowerment. Later she might contribute towards the decisions and still later she might even initiate group activities. Hannan (2003) on the other hand, is of the opinion that empowerment is much more than facilitating an

increase in women's participation. It must also include processes that lead women to perceive themselves as having rights and entitlements and to be able to voice their demands as well as provide improved access to decision making-opportunities. Hannan's (2003) concept of empowerment is preferred in this thesis because if it is only participation without decision-making and rights to voice demands, it is not empowerment. Women's empowerment in this thesis refers to the:

> Equitable representation of women in decision-making structures and their voice in the formulation of policies affecting their societies (Claros & Zahidi 2005, p. 4).

Women's representation in upper and lower houses of government and at local level is extremely low throughout the world. According to the Inter Parliamentary Union website, in spite of all the efforts being made for women's political empowerment since 1995, in 2011 women constituted only 17% of the membership of the world's parliaments. There are different reasons for the low political participation of women in different regions of the world. It is beyond the scope of the research to explain all these reasons. However, in the context of South Asia, the area for this research, various authors suggest three main reasons for the low participation rate of women in assemblies. First is male dominance and associated patriarchal social structures; second is the violence against women, and third is the influence of family politics that restricts women from non-political background from entering into politics.

Patriarchy

The term patriarchy was developed by feminists during the 1970s and 1980s and Hartmann (1981, p. 14) defined it as a set of social relations between men, which have a material base and which create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women.

Patriarchal structures in a society give rise to male dominance (a term which has been extensively used in this thesis's description of Pakistan and Bangladesh as the two are perceived to be male-dominant societies). Sanday (1981, p. 14) describes 'male dominance' as,

> A situation in which men have highly preferential access, although not always exclusive rights, to those activities to which the society accords the greatest value and the exercise of which permits a measure of control over others.

Such male dominance is prominent in South Asian social structures. While male dominance may be found everywhere around the world, its intensity varies between regions. Thus in most first world countries, it is less pronounced than in other parts of the world, such as South Asia, where it has got deep roots in social structures. Ritcher (1991) argues that male dominance in political arenas around the world has been legitimated in laws and customs. She argues that politics or the public life of the polity has been presumed to be a natural sphere for men while for women, to the extent they have a space or turf to call their own, the 'natural' sphere has been presumed to be private. Such an attitude of male dominance where males are considered superior to any other creature on earth causes a superiority complex among men over women (Cockburn 1991; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). This superiority complex deriving from patriarchal structures gives rise to violence against women.

Violence against Women

The UN Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women (1993, p.116) defines this violence as,

> Any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Table 3.2 lists the types of violence against women that may occur in their life cycle and the various traumas attached to the types of violence.

Table 3.2: Violence against Women: A Life Cycle Approach for Women and Traumas

Age	Type of Violence
Infancy	Female infanticide, sexual and physical abuse, differential access to food and medical care
Girlhood	Child marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual and psychological abuse, differential access to food and medical care, pornography and child prostitution
Adolescence-Reproductive age	Sexual harassment and abuses of all types, forced slavery, forced prostitution, domestic violence by husband and in-laws, forced pregnancy, trafficking, dowry abuse, burning, honour killing
Elderly	Sexual, physical and psychological abuse
Trauma as a Result of Violence against Women	
Physical Trauma	Death, disabilities, injury, different health problems like asthma, headaches and other body aches, irritable bowel syndrome, alcohol or drug abuse, behaviours (smoking, shouting)
Mental Trauma	Fear, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, eating and sleeping disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, suicide, low self-esteem
Reproductive Trauma	Miscarriage, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, maternal morbidity, maternal mortality, pelvic inflammatory disease

Source: (Sharma 2004, p. 154)

Table 3.2 indicates that women are subjected not only to physical violence but also to mental traumas at all ages. A violence-ridden society has to pay high costs not only in terms of physical, mental and health treatment but also in terms of women's non-productive life patterns and their unavailability for income generating opportunities. This ultimately leads to their dependence on males in every walk of life. Dependence is reflected in societies' dominant values and attitudes. There are, of course exceptions where women are not under the influence of male dominance or

violence but such an attitude (male dominance and violence) becomes the overall pattern of the affected societies.

Family Politics

Cultural values, norms, traditions and practices are other factors responsible for low levels of women's participation in politics at national or local levels. The most significant cultural norm in Asia, particularly South Asia, is the tradition of family politics. It means that most of the female entrants into political arena belong to families that have been in politics for generations. If we look at the list of female leaders who rose to the status of head of state or head of government after 1960[4], we find Asia is the only continent where the majority of female rulers who rose to the highest political office had family backgrounds in politics at those political levels.

The table 3.3 lists the names of all female heads of state and heads of government from 1960 onwards in a chronological order.

Table 3.3: Female Political Rulers around the Globe (as of 31 December 2011)

No.	Name	Country	Head of State/Head of Government	Era	Relationship with Popular Politician/Ruling Dynasty
1	Sirimavo Bandaranaike	Sri Lanka	Prime Minister	21 Jul 1960 to 27 Mar 1965, 29 May 1970 to 23 Jul 1977 and 14 Nov 1994 to 10 Aug 2000	Yes. Her husband Solomon Bandaranaike was Prime Minister
2	Indira Gandhi	India	Prime Minister	19 Jan 1966 to 24 Mar 1977 and	Yes. Her father Jawaharlal Nehru was first Prime

[4] There was no Political Head of State/Head of Government prior to 1960

				14 Jan 1980 to 31 Oct 1984	Minister of India
3	Golda Meir	Israel	Prime Minister	17 Mar 1969 to 3 Jun 1974	No
4	María Estela ('Isabel') Martínez de Perón	Argentina	President	1 Jul 1974 to 24 Mar 1976	Yes. Her husband Juan Peron was former President
5	Elisabeth Domitien	Central African Republic	Prime Minister	3 Jan 1975 to 7 Apr 1976	No
6	Margaret Thatcher	Great Britain	Prime Minister	4 May 1979 to 28 Nov 1990	No
7	Maria da Lourdes Pintasilgo	Portugal	Prime Minister	1 Aug 1979 to 3 Jan 1980.	No
8	Lidia Gueiler Tejada	Bolivia	Caretaker President	17 Nov 1979 to 18 Jul 1980	No
9	Dame Eugenia Charles	Dominica	Prime Minister	21 Jul 1980 to 14 Jun 1995	No
10	Vigdis Finnbogadottir	Iceland	President	1 Aug 1980 to 1 Aug 1996	No
11	Gro Harlem Brundtland	Norway	Prime Minister	4 Feb 1981 to 14 Oct 1981, 9 May 1986 to 16 Oct 1989 and from 3 Nov 1990 to 25 Oct 1996	No
12	Milka Planinc	Yugoslavia	Prime Minister	16 May 1982 to 15 May 1986	No
13	Agatha Barbara	Malta	President	15 Feb 1982 to 15 Feb 1987	No
14	Maria Liberia-Peters	Netherlands Antilles	Prime Minister	1984-1986 and 1988-1994	No
15	Corazon Aquino	Philippines	President	25 Feb 1986 to 30 Jun 1992	Yes, her husband was a senator, governor of a province and very

					popular opposition leader against Marcos regime
16	Benazir Bhutto	Pakistan	Prime Minister	from 2 Dec 1988 to 6 Aug 1990, and from 19 Oct 1993 to 5 Nov 1996	Yes, her father Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was Prime Minister
17	Sabine Bergmann-Pohl	German Democratic Republic	President	5 Apr to 2 Oct 1990	No
18	Kazimiera Danuta Prunskiene	Lithuania	Prime Minister	17 Mar 1990 to 10 Jan 1991	No
19	Violeta Chamorro	Nicaragua	President	25 Apr 1990 to 10 Jan 1997 1990	No
20	Mary Robinson	Ireland	President	3 Dec 1990 to 12 Sep 1997	No
21	Ertha Pascal Trouillot	Haiti	Interim President	1990	No
22	Khaleda Zia	Bangladesh	Prime Minister	20 Mar 1991 to 30 Mar 1996 and 10 Oct 2001 to 29 Oct 2006	Yes. Her Husband Zia-ur-Rehman was President
23	Edith Cresson	France	Prime Minister	15 May 1991 to 2 Apr 1992	No
24	Hanna Suchocka	Poland	Prime Minister	8 Jul 1992 to 26 Oct 1993	No
25	Kim Campbell	Canada	Prime Minister	25 Jun to 5 Nov 1993	No
26	Tansu Ciller	Turkey	Prime Minister	25 Jun 1993 to 7 Mar 1996	Yes. Daughter of a Turkish Governor of Bilecik province
27	Sylvie Kinigi	Burundi	Prime Minister	10 Jul 1993 to 11 Feb 1994.	No
28	Agathe Uwilingiyimana,	Rwanda	Prime Minister	18 Jul 1993 to her killing on 7 Apr 1994	No
29	Susanne Camelia-	Netherlands	Prime	1993, 1998	No

	Romer	Antilles	Minister		
30	Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga	Sri Lanka	President	14 Nov 1994 to 19 Nov 2005	Yes. Her father Solomon Bandaranaike and mother Sirimavo Bandaranaike, were both Prime Ministers
31	Reneta Indzhova	Bulgaria	Interim Prime Minister	16 Oct 1994 to 25 Jan 1995.	No
32	Claudette Werleigh	Haiti	Prime Minister	7 Nov 1995 to 27 Feb 1996.	No
33	Sheikh Hasina Wajed	Bangladesh	Prime Minister	23 Jun 1996 to 15 Jul 2001 and since 6 Jan 2009.	Yes. Her father Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehamn was founder of Bangladesh and former President.
34	Mary McAleese	Ireland	President	Since 11 Nov 1997	No
35	Pamela Gordon	Bermuda	Prime Minister	1997	No
36	Janet Jagan	Guyana	Prime Minister	17 Mar 1997 to 19 Dec, 1997	No
37	Jenny Shipley	New Zealand	Prime Minister	8 Dec 1997 to 10 Dec 1999	No
38	Jennifer M. Smith	Bermuda	Prime Minister	1998	No
39	Ruth Dreifuss	Switzerland	President	1 Jan 1999 to 1 Jan 2000	No
40	Nyam-Osoriyn Tuyaa	Mongolia	Acting Prime Minister	22 to 30 Jul 1999	No
41	Helen Clark	New Zealand	Prime Minister	10 Dec 1999 to 19 Nov 2008.	No
42	Vaira Vike-Freiberga	Latvia	President	8 Jul 1999 to 8 Jul 2007	No
43	Mireya Moscoso	Panama	President	1 Sep 1999 to 1 Sep 2004	Yes. She is the widow of former President Arnulfo Arias
44	Tarja Halonen	Finland	President	Since 1 Mar 2000	No

45	Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	Philippines	President	20 Jan 2001 to 30 Jun 2010	Yes. She is the daughter of former President Diosdado Macapagal.
46	Mame Madior Boye	Senegal	Prime Minister	3 Mar 2001 to 4 Nov 2002	No
47	Megawati Sukarnoputri	Indonesia	President	23 Jul 2001 to 20 Oct 2004	Yes. She is the daughter of Indonesia's first President, Sukarno
48	Maria das Neves	Sao Tome and Principe	Prime Minster	7 Oct 2002 to 16 Jul 2003	No
49	Anneli Tuulikki Jäätteenmäki	Finland	Prime Minister	17 Apr 2003 to 24 Jun 2003	No
50	Beatriz Merino	Peru	Prime Minster	28 Jun 2003 to 15 Dec 2003	No
51	Luisa Diogo	Mozambique	Prime Minster	17 Feb 2004 to 18 Jan 2010	No
52	Radmila Sekerinska	Macedonia	Acting Prime Minister	Twice in 2004, 12 May to 12 Jun 2004, 18 Nov 2004 to 17 Dec 2004.	No
53	Angela Merkel	Germany	Chancellor	From 22 Nov 2005	No
54	Yulia Tymoshenko	Ukraine	Prime Minster	24 Jan to 8 Sep 2005 and 18 Dec 2007 to 3 Mar 2010.	No
55	Michelle Bachelet	Chile	President	11 Mar 2006 to 11 Mar 2010	No
56	Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf	Liberia	President	Since 16 Jan 2006	No
57	Portia Simpson Miller	Jamaica	Prime Minster	30 Mar 2006 to 11 Sep 2007	No
58	Han Myung-sook	South Korea	Prime Minster	19 Apr 2006 to 7 Mar 2007.	No
59	Micheline Calmy-Rey	Switzerland	President	1 Jan 2007-1 Jan 2008	No

60	Pratibha Devisingh Patil	India	President	Since 25 Jul 2007	No
61	Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner	Argentina	President	Since 10 Dec 2007	Yes. Her Husband Nestor Kirchner was the President (2003-2007)
62	Borjana Kristo	Bosnia and Herzegovina	President	2007	No
63	Zinaida Greceanii	Moldova	Prime Minster	31 Mar 2008 to 14 Sep 2009	No
64	Michèle Pierre-Louis	Haiti	Prime Minister	5 Sep 2008 to 11 Nov 2009	No
65	Jóhanna Sigurdardóttir	Iceland	Prime Minister	Since 1 Feb 2009	No
66	Jadranka Kosor	Croatia	Prime Minister	Since 6 Jul 2009	No
67	Dalia Grybauskaite	Lithuania	President	Since 12 Jul 2009	No
68	Laura Chinchilla	Costa Rica	President	Since 8 May 2010	No
69	Kamla Persad Bissessar	Trinidad and Tobago	Prime Minster	Since 2010	No
70	Roza Otunbayeva	Kyrgyzstan	Interim Prime Minister	7 Apr to 19 May 2010	No
71	Mari Kiviniemi	Finland	Prime Minister	Since 22 Jun 2010	No
72	Julia Gillard	Australia	Prime Minster	Since 24 Jun 2010	No
73	Iveta Radicová	Slovakia	Prime Minister	Since 8 Jul 2010	No
74	Yinglak Chinnawat	Thailand	Prime Minister	Since 5 Aug 2011	Yes. Her brother Thaksin Shinawatra was Prime Minister
75	Portia Simpson Miller	Jamaica	Prime Minister	Since 5 Jan 2012	

Source**:** Adapted from website of Nordic Council of Ministers for Report on Women in Politics, IPU (Inter Parliamentary Union) website, Quota Project of IDEA website and ECLAC (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean) website and

http://www.squidoo.com/women-presidents-women-prime-ministers,

http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00women3.ht http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/,

Legend

Continent	Colour	Indication
Asia		
Europe		
Americas		
Africa		
Australia/NewZealand		
		President
		Chancellor
		No Relationship with Most Popular Politician/Ruling Dynasty
		Relationship with Most Popular Politician/Ruling Dynasty

Table 3.3 lists the names of the women who have held the top political offices in different countries around the world, along with their tenure and family relationship to promote male political office holder, if any. It is clear from the Table that from 1960-2010, only 75 women were able to hold the highest political offices, around the world as compared to the considerably large number of men.

Table 3.3 also indicates that of the 28 women rose to the level of prime minister (PM) or president in Europe none were related to a ruling dynasty. Most of the women came from families who had not occupied elected political offices. It is also true for Africa (7 women) and Australia/New Zealand (3 women) where the women who attained the highest political offices in their respective countries hailed from similar families. In the Americas 20 females were elected to govern their respective countries, out of which only three were from ruling elites. Quite

interestingly Asia emerges as the only continent of the world where 11 out of 16 elected female heads of state/heads of government were related to former presidents, prime ministers or influential politicians.

India, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Israel and South Korea are the five nations having women political rulers with no relations to past or present ruling elites (see table 3.3). But among these five nations, India and South Korea have female heads of ruling political parties who actually belong to influential political families. In the case of India, Sonia Gandhi is the head of the ruling Congress Party. She is the most influential person in the country. Her name is not included in above table as she is not a government official. She does, however belong to India's most influential political family, which can be seen as a ruling dynasty, as Sonia's husband Rajiv Gandhi, mother-in-law Indra Gandhi and grand father-in-law Jawaharlal Nehru were all prime ministers. The All India Congress India's ruling party is following the ancestral pattern for selecting its chairperson who from the Gandhi family. Sonia being the widow of the former PM Rajiv Gandhi and daughter-in-law of two times former PM, Indra Gandhi, fulfils the South Asian criterion for being head of a political family. In the cases of Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan the women leaders attained the highest offices only as interim or caretaker prime ministers and were not elected PMs. Israel is closer to the west than east for its affiliations, ties, democratic patterns and policies. South Korea is another Asian country where a woman reached the highest political office without any political family background. But Table 3.3 does not contain the name of Park Geun Hye, head of the Korean ruling Grand National Party, and considered as the most influential politician of South Korea. She is the daughter of the former President of South Korea, Park Chung Hee. Thus, Asia emerges as the only continent in the world where ancestral or family politics play a central role in selecting women leaders.

Within Asia, South Asia remains the most family oriented as seven of the eight female rulers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka rose to power because of their family ties. It is pertinent to investigate the reason of such dominance in South Asia, as the thesis's two case studies were drawn from this region. The patterns of political selection at these high levels may be reproduced at lower levels and may permeate the selection of female quota representatives.

Srimavo Bandranaike was three times PM of Sri Lanka and the first female PM in the world. She was the widow of former Sri Lankan PM, Solomon Bandaranaike. Chandrika Kumaratunga was the President of Sri Lanka from 1994-2005. She is the daughter of two former prime ministers, her father, S.W.R.D Bandaranaike, and her mother, Srimavo Bandranaike. Mother and daughter worked as PM and president during the same period which was the last term of Bandranaike and the first term of Kumaratunga (1994-2000).

Indra Gandhi two times PM of India was the second female PM in the world. She was the daughter of former Indian PM, Jawaharlal Nehru. She still holds the record for being the world's longest serving prime minister.

Benazir Bhutto was PM of Pakistan twice during 1988-1990, 1993-1996 and leader of the opposition from 1991-1993 and 1996-1999. She was the daughter of former PM Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. She was the first female PM of the Islamic world as well as the youngest PM in the World. After her assassination in 2007, her widower Asif Ali Zardari rose to the political power to secure the Presidency of Pakistan, thus breaking the traditional norm where only widows of deceased politicians rise to power.

Begum Khalida Zia was two times PM of Bangladesh from 1991-1996 and 2001-2006 and is the current leader of the opposition. She is the widow of former President of Bangladesh, Zia-ur-

Rehman. Sheikh Hasina Wajid, the current PM of Bangladesh, was also PM from 1996-2001. She is the daughter of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, the first President and first PM of Bangladesh.

In all these cases, the most obvious reason for these women's rise to political power was their membership of elite political families. Another common characteristic that most of them share is being a victim and/or suffering loss at a certain point in time of their careers.

> The homicide, detention or imprisonment of a political leader stemming from a famous dynasty generates a very strong victimization sentiment which can be used by daughters and widows of such politicians in order to mobilize their political followers (Fleshenberg 2003, p. 2).

This suggests that that in male-dominated and patriarchal societies it is not necessarily easy for the women of elite political families to rise to the top political positions. For this, they need to be thrust into the political limelight due to family crises where no suitable family males present themselves or where victimisation and martyrdom can be used as powerful tools for political mobilisation. But these female leaders operate among and with men and have taken few if any actions to advance women's empowerment. They operate according to the gender status quo, a matter which is investigated in the detailed case studies of quotas in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment policies have gained greatest acceptance among international donor organisations and agencies implementing development projects, but implementation has not necessarily been as envisaged in theory (Pronk 2001; Rao & Kelleher 2003). Despite the visible existence of women's empowerment in gender equality programs in international development institutions for over fifteen years, there is little evidence to suggest women's empowerment concerns have been consistently and successfully implemented in development projects (Waal 2006; Jones et al. 2005). The declared commitment to women's

empowerment often evaporates at the planning and implementation levels and several organisational evaluations have found that the women's empowerment approach has not been implemented systematically and effectively or that the degree to which women's empowerment has been integrated into development practice is varied and inconsistent (Emmerij 2002).

In most cases, women's empowerment policies are formulated at the donor level to be applied in projects and programs by implementing agencies (UNDP 2007). But implementing agencies may develop their own women's empowerment policies, which will have some level of influence on donor agencies policies (Waal 2006). The successful promotion of women's empowerment depends greatly on how implementing agencies interpret their responsibilities for implementing women's empowerment and what they subsequently inform donor agencies. A supportive appropriate institutional culture is crucial for the effective implementation of women's empowerment policies as it determines the degree of commitment to women's empowerment. It needs not only to be promoted at the highest organisational level but it also becomes a part of everyday practice for the whole organisation - an unconscious action. However, a major obstacle to the effective implementation of women's empowerment policies is that the institutional change is rarely part of policies or strategies to promote women's empowerment.

In the light of the preceding discussion it is to move on to the case study countries to critically analyse the policies of women's empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh. To understand the present, it is imperative to track the history of the country's political institutions and the roles played by various actors in the course of the implementation of policies relating to women's empowerment.

The Roles of Institutionalism and Actors in Policy Formulation and Implementation

Understanding the role and nature of any gender in any institution is not possible without knowing the character and history of the relevant political institutions and the roles of leading actors. The main purpose of this section is to contribute insights on these matters to an analytical framework for the analysis of empirical data in this thesis. This section is divided into two parts. The first section explains historical institutionalism and the second section explains role of actors involved in the introduction and implementation of a policy.

Institutions are structures that play an important role in every aspect of social, economic and political life (Knight 1992; Scott 1995). Institutions are based on conventions. A 'convention' is any agreement upon procedure. For instance, language is a convention, as both the meanings of the words and grammar require social agreement for communication. To the extent a convention is adopted by large numbers of people and comes to be collectively binding, it is called an institution (Immergut 2010; Hodgson 2006).

The increasing acknowledgement of the role of institutions in social life involves the recognition that much human interaction and activity is structured in terms of overt or implicit rules. The term 'institution' is commonly applied to customs and behaviour patterns important to a society, as well as to particular formal organisations of government and the public service (Voss 2001). Institutions are structures and mechanisms of social order and cooperation governing the behaviour of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. Institutions usually have a social purpose and stability that make and enforce rules to govern cooperative human behaviour

(Knight 1992). One useful way of looking at institutions is to categorise them into three broad groups, rational choice institutions, sociological institutions and historical institutions.

Rational Choice Institutionalism

The rational choice school argues that human beings are rational individualists who calculate the costs and benefits in the choices they face (Powell & DiMaggio 1991). Rational choice institutionalists think institutions are important because they frame the individual's strategic behaviour. They believe that people follow rules because humans are strategic actors who want to maximise their personal or individual gain (Hall & Taylor 1996). People cooperate because they get more with cooperation than without it. People obey rules because such behaviours can lead to a better life than that obtained by not following rules (Hall & Taylor 1996)

Sociological Institutionalism

Sociological institutionalists, in contrast, see human beings as fundamentally social beings. In this view, humans are neither as self-interested nor as rational as the rational choice model would have it (Steinmo 2008). People are followers of traditions and customs and act habitually. Sociological institutions frame the way in which people see their world and are not just rules within which they try to work. Rather than following rules to maximise their self-interest, sociological institutionalists think that humans generally follow 'logic of appropriateness'. In this view social norms that provide this logic of appropriateness are the important institutions (rules) that govern everyday life and social interaction (Hodgson 2006).

Historical Institutionalism

Historical institutionalists adopt a central position between these two views: human beings are both norm-abiding rule followers and self-interested rational actors. How one behaves depends on the individual, on the context, and on the rule (Steinmo 2008). A historical institutionalist does not believe that humans are simple rule followers or that they are simply strategic actors who use rules to maximise their interests. A historical institutionalist can even be rather agnostic on these issues. What the historical institution researcher or scholar wants to know is why a certain choice was made and why a certain outcome occurred (Thelen 1999). Most likely, any significant political outcome is best understood as a product of both rule-following and interest-maximising. How do people know which is the most followed behaviour (self-interested, altruistic/collective or simply habitual)? The historical institutionalist goes to the historical record to find out (Steinmo 2008).

Out of the three approaches to institutions described above, historical institutionalism is the most appropriate for this research and is utilised to analyse the historical development of women's political empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Historical institutionalism is preferred because it emphases the importance of history and context in terms of policy making. Historical institutionalism tends to conceptualise the relationship between institutions and individual behaviour more broadly than the other two approaches. It examines the roles played by different actors in the development of an institution and highlights the irregularities of power associated with the operation and development of institutions (Thelen 1999). Events happen within a historical context and people draw meaning and lesson from them which are manifested in values and behaviour and which thus have a direct consequence for the decisions about future policies.

The second reason why it is important to use a perspective is that historical institutionalists argue that actors or agents can learn from experiences (Hodgson 2006). History is not an independent chain of events. Historical institutionalists understand that attitudes, behaviour and strategic choices take place inside particular social, political, economic and even cultural contexts. Rather than treating all political action in the same way irrespective of time, place or context, historical institutionalists intentionally attempt to situate all the actors and events in the appropriate context (Pierson 2004). Thus, by deepening and enriching their understanding of the historical moment and the actors within it, they are able to offer more accurate explanations for the specific events that they explore than if they had treated their variables without the chronological dimension.

Historical institutionalism's other strength is its willingness to derive conclusions from models of rationality and actor preferences but not through vague assumptions but rather through careful empirical observation (Immergut 2010). Historical institutionalism gives 'actors' their due preference and considers them as interpretive, choice making and operative in a strategic manner (Pierson 2004). This perspective is useful for this research as it involves analysis the roles played by various actors such as political parties, male parliamentarians, international donor agencies and civil society organisations and NGO's in the formulation and implementation of the policies of women's political empowerment through quotas in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Howlett and Ramesh's Classification of Actors for Policy Formulation and Implementation

An analytically productive way of examining actors in the process of policy formulation is through the model of Howlett and Ramesh (1995). The authors see policies as being made by 'policy subsystems' which are defined as,

> Forums where actors discuss policy issues and persuade and bargain in pursuit of their interests (Howlett & Ramesh 1995, p. 51).

Policy subsystems consist of actors at state, societal and international levels. Some actors are closely associated with formulation and implementation of policies while others are only partly involved. These actors interact with other state and societal actors in negotiating and bargaining to incorporate or reject their interests and ideas particularly at the implementation stage. The roles of these actors are critically analysed in the comparative analysis chapters on Pakistan and Bangladesh by utilising the classification of actors described by Howlett and Ramesh (1995).

Howlett and Ramesh (1995) classify policy actors into five categories. These are elected officials, appointed officials, interest groups, research organisations and mass media. Elected and appointed official are from the state while the remainder are from society. These five groups collectively form policy subsystems. Howlett and Ramesh (1995) further classify elected officials involve in policy subsystems into two groups—members of the executive and members of the legislature.

Members of the executive are generally the most important actors in a policy cycle. The executive holds the ultimate authority to formulate and implement policies. Members of the executive have control over fiscal resources, as well as sources of information. They utilise these resources to push policies in their desired direction or they can control the dissemination of information that weakens the case of those opposed to their views. Members of the executive are the political bosses of the bureaucracy who provide advice for the formulation of every policy. For matters of national importance, decisions of the executive have to be ratified by the legislature.

Legislatures are the forums that give formal approval to implement policies. In parliamentary systems where the party of the executive is the majority party, legislatures usually approve the bill forwarded by the executive. In presidential systems, congress is usually autonomous of the executive, and the president has to negotiate with the legislature. As the two countries under research are parliamentary democracies, research is focused on the role of members of the executive and legislature in parliamentary systems. While the executive or the legislature are generally viewed as dominant, the basic work for the formulation and implementation of policies is done by appointed officials, the bureaucracy according to the guidelines provided by the executive.

Bureaucracy or appointed officials is the second category of actors presented by Howlett and Ramesh (1995) for the formulation and implementation of a policy. Bureaucracy has not only access to material resources but also is a repository of a wide range of skills and expertise which makes it an important organisation in determining government decisions. In some circumstances, it has the capability to influence the executive according to its interests. Interest groups are the third categories of actors

> While policy making is a preserve of the government and particularly of the executive and bureaucracy, the realities of modern politics enable interest groups to play a significant role in the process (Howlett & Ramesh 1995, p. 57).

Financial resources, networks and knowledge are the most useful resources of interest group. More likely, interest groups try to apply political pressure by lobbying support from members of international community, civil society or political parties. Interest groups may also offer partial or full financing of the implementation of a policy or offer other modes of assistance in cash or kind. Knowledge is the other important resource of the interest group. The members of interest group

acquire and use the relevant information that is not or less available to others. Elected and appointed officials may collect information from interest groups for the formulation and implementation of policies. For this, as Howlett and Ramesh argue, both politicians and bureaucrats 'curry favour' with interest groups to secure the information (1995, p. 57)

Research organisations and mass media are other actors, listed by Howlett and Ramesh (1995) involved as significant in formulation and implementation of policies. Research organisations, such as universities, NGOs and development institutions (such as Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Poverty Alleviation Research School, Centre for Health and Population Research Dhaka, International Women's Rights Actions Watch Asia-Pacific, World Economic Forum Switzerland) often present solutions to public problems that can be translated into useful knowledge for policy purposes. Similarly media act as a bridge between state and society. Media in most of the cases, conveys the voices of society to state authorities that can be utilised as useful inputs for carrying out policies in a specific direction. Media may, however, be used to advance the views and ideologies of special interest groups and media owners.

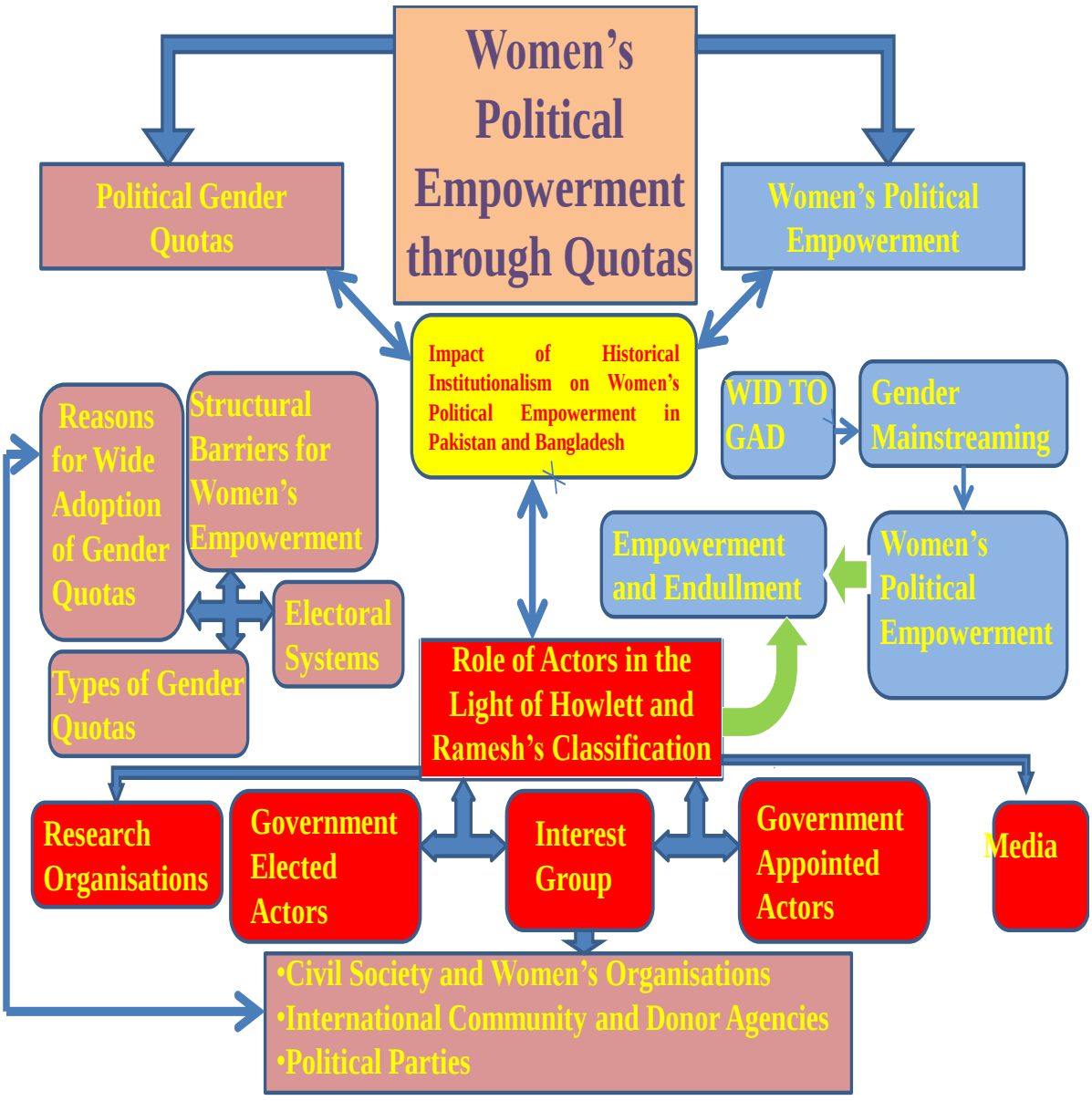
Political parties are actors that often have significant influence on the policy process, though these are not formally included by Howlett and Ramesh (1995) in their policy subsystems. They do, however, emphasise that many actors who are in the policy subsystems may be influenced by the party to which they belong.

Analytical Framework

Drawing on the discussions of theories and concepts relating to gender political quotas and women's political empowerment in chapters two and three, it is now appropriate to present the analytical framework constructed for this thesis. The framework guides the ordering and

presentation of the data on women especially as they apply to gender quotas and also provides the tools needed to analyse these data. The framework is presented in Figure 3.1

Figure 3.1: Analytical Framework on Women's Political Empowerment through Quotas



This research is based on the literature of two specific areas, women's political empowerment and political gender quotas. Concepts have been taken from both fields and utilised in analysing the empirical evidences from Pakistan and Bangladesh. The literature on women's empowerment presented in this chapter argues that social independence and economic empowerment of women are pre-requisites for political empowerment. But political empowerment cannot be achieved in isolation, without social and economic empowerment. This proposition is explored in Chapters five and six on the socio-economic and political conditions of women in Pakistan and Bangladesh. At the same time, it has been described in Chapters five and six that various steps have been taken by the governments of both countries for women's political empowerment through quotas, especially after Beijing Platform for Action 1995. Different aspects of women's political empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh have been critically analysed through borrowing concepts from theories on women's political empowerment and political gender quotas (as shown in Figure 3.1 in blue and purple shades respectively). The concepts that have been given special importance during the course of analysis from women's political empowerment are, transformation of developing countries from WID to GAD, gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and women's political empowerment. The research probes if women's political empowerment has been achieved in both countries and whether the situation remains as that of endullment. The research also explored the roles of various actors in the light of in the formulation and implementation of gender quota policies in the light of Howlett and Ramesh's classification of actors (as shown in red in Figure 3.1).

From the literature on political gender quotas, the concepts that have been given due importance are those providing explanations for the wide adoption of gender quotas throughout the world. These include structural barriers that restrain women from active political participation in

developing countries; and the different types of quotas and which electoral systems are used and are best suited for adopting quota policies. Theories on these concepts have been carefully examined and applied in the context of Pakistan and Bangladesh (as shown in peach in Figure 3.1).

In the analytical chapters, a co-relation is established between classification of actors presented by Howlett and Ramesh and categories of actors described by literature on gender quotas by incorporating the latter into Howlett and Ramesh's interest group. These additional sub-categories include civil society, notably women's organisations, the international community, especially donor agencies and political parties (as shown in Figure 3.1).

During the course of analysis, a historical institutionalism perspective has been applied to facilitate assessment of what happened in history and why, and what lessons both countries have learned from history and whether government actors applied these lessons when in adopting and implementing gender quota policies (as shown in yellow in Figure 3.1).

By applying of all above-mentioned concepts, a comparative analysis has been made between Pakistan and Bangladesh drawing data from empirical studies previously conducted in both countries by academics, international organisations, governmental bodies and NGOs and in the light of various theories and concepts women's political empowerment outlined above. This enables the research to move towards determining whether gender quotas adopted in Pakistan and Bangladesh have been helpful for women's political empowerment in both countries or whether they have been merely endullment, as is described in literature (as shown with green arrows in Figure 3.1).

4. Research Design

This chapter deals with the methodology adopted for this research. The first section describes the case study approaches used for this research. The second section explains the design developed for this research and the institutional boundaries for case study countries. Section three accounts for the limitations of the research and the last section indicates the sources of data.

Case Study Approach

Yin (1984, p. 23) defines the case study research method as:

> An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

The above definition of Yin is adopted for this research. Political empowerment through quotas is a contemporary phenomenon that has a real-life context in the case study countries (Pakistan and Bangladesh) including various structural barriers that restrict women of both countries from actively participating in politics. Both Pakistan and Bangladesh have recently adopted quota policies for women's political empowerment but in both cases cultural values and traditions constrain political advancement of women. This suggests ambiguities between phenomenon and boundaries of women's political empowerment in both countries which is in line with the second part of above definition. In the analysis of research questions, multiple sources of evidence such

as socio-economic and political conditions of women in both countries and the roles played by various actors for women's political empowerment have been included as context. Without knowledge of this context, the focal research phenomenon of quotas for women could not be properly conceptualised and understood.

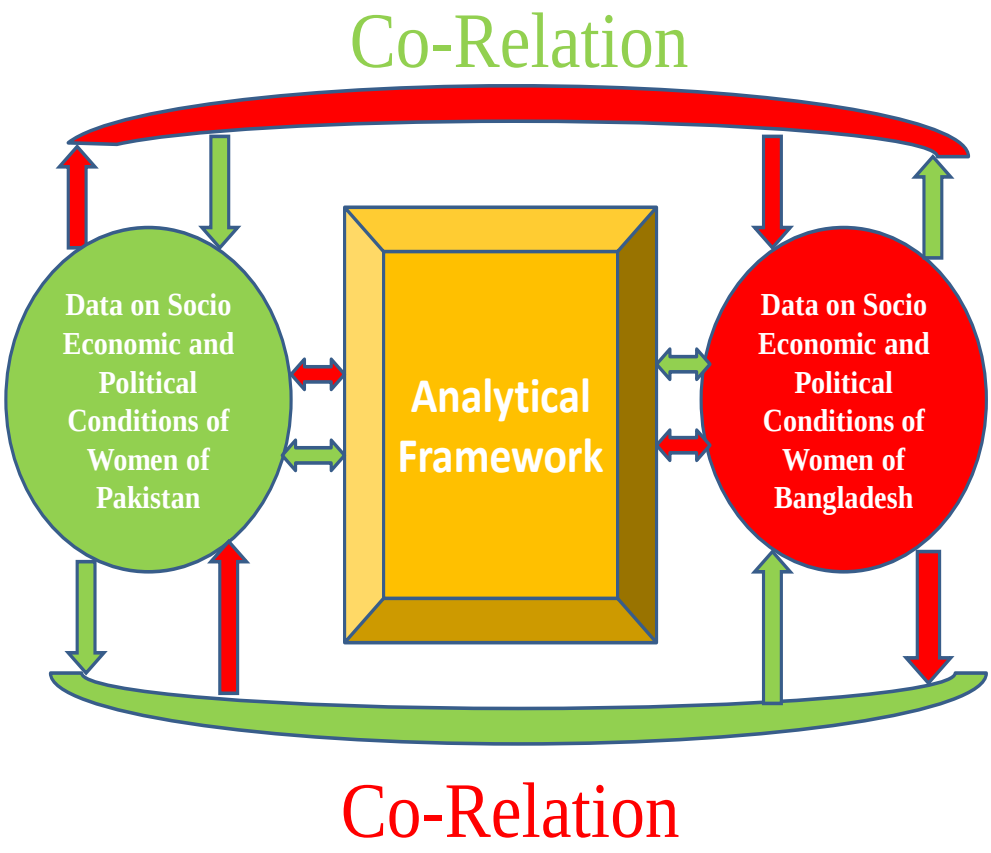
Moreover, the case study method is applied because it enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. The case study approach has been adopted because it is a robust research method particularly when a holistic investigation is required (Yin 1994). By including both quantitative and qualitative data, a case study helps explain both the processes and outcomes of a phenomenon through reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation (Tellis 1997). Case studies are useful for ascertaining whether particular government policies were efficient or whether the goals of a particular policy were achieved (Tellis 1997).

Descriptive and explanatory case study methods have been utilised for this research. The reason for adopting descriptive case studies is that as the research is based on secondary data, descriptive case studies allow the researcher to use available data in novel ways. McDonough and McDonough (1997) suggest that descriptive case studies present data mostly in a narrative form. By contrast, explanatory case studies examine the data in detail in order to explain the phenomena in the data. For instance, a researcher may ask why a particular policy was adopted and what would be the outcome of this policy. On the basis of the data, the researcher may create a judgment and test this judgment (McDonough & McDonough 1997).

Co-Relation between Empirical Data and Analytical Framework

The research for this study has been designed by establishing a co-relation between data collected for both countries through secondary sources and an analytical framework earlier explained in Figure 3.1. The research design is shown in Figure 4.1:

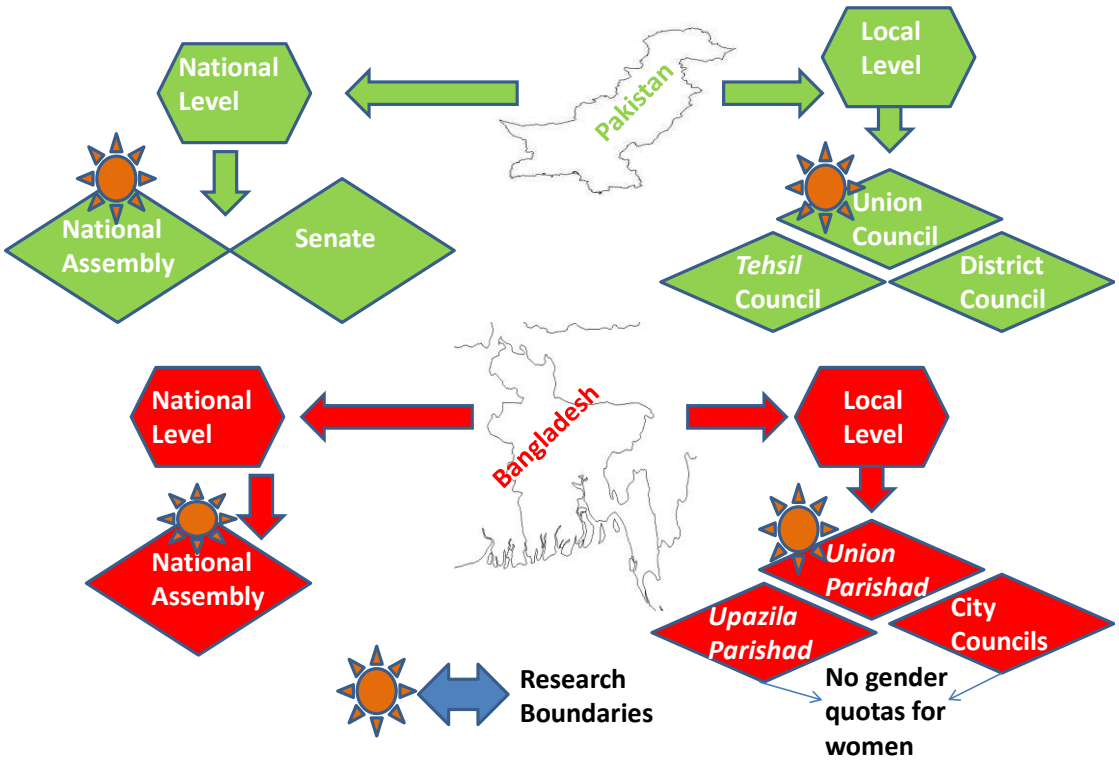
Figure 4.1: Research Design



The analytical framework has been designed after careful analysis of relevant literature on women's empowerment and gender quotas to order and analyse the empirical data on socio-economic and political conditions of women of Pakistan and Bangladesh in line with the

objectives of the study. Figure 4.2 explains the research boundaries of the study at national and local levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Figure 4.2: Research Boundaries at National and Local Levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh:



As the research is about the political empowerment of women through quotas at national and local levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh, it is important to grasp from the outset, the institutional arrangements in the two case study countries. These are shown in Figure 4.2. Pakistan has a bicameral legislature while Bangladesh has a unicameral legislature. In order to maintain consistency and similarities between these two countries, the performance of women in the upper house of Pakistan has not been evaluated. Only the lower houses of parliament, in both countries have been included in the research. At local levels, attention is mostly focused on the lowest tiers

of local government i.e. the union council in the case of Pakistan and the *union parishad* in the case of Bangladesh. Where necessary, mention has been made of higher tiers of local government in both countries. The reason for including the lowest tiers of local government in this research is to maintain comparative consistency for both countries. The lowest sub-national tier is the only level where both Pakistan and Bangladesh have adopted gender quotas through direct election of women. There are no quota provisions for women in Bangladesh for the upper tiers of local government while Pakistan has 33% quotas for women at *tehsil council and* district council through indirect election. These gender quotas could not be compared with Bangladesh. These councils have not been included except where necessary to make important points.

Limitations of the Research

The first limitation of the research is that it was carried out in Australia on Pakistan and Bangladesh but entirely from secondary data. This was due to the restriction imposed on the researcher by the research funding institution in Australia (Department of Education, Science and Technology (DEST) Endeavour Awards). The condition of the award required residence in Australia for entire duration of the award according to the agreement signed before the commencement of research. This condition was not mentioned to me or my supervisor in advance to the scholarship.

The second impediment was the various natural disasters and terrorist activities in Pakistan during 2008-10. Pakistan experienced an upsurge in terrorist suicide attacks and other violent activities throughout 2008-10 due to its role as an important ally of the USA in its 'war against terror'. There was also severe flooding (the worst in the history of Pakistan) throughout Pakistan that had greatly damaged infrastructure throughout country. Extensive field research was not

possible in these circumstances. This situation restricted perusal of permission from funding organisation through letters of support from my supervisor and the university authorities. Although, the original planned study was to focus only on Pakistan and to conduct fieldwork there, the limitations mentioned above necessitated a rethink of the research project. This rethink led to the current comparative case studies project involving both Pakistan and Bangladesh but with all data deriving from secondary sources.

The third limitation this produced was a complete reliance on existing data for Pakistan and Bangladesh. The data were not complete and so the research had to make best use of what was available.

Data Collection

The technique of secondary analysis of data collected through qualitative and quantitative methods has been utilised to find answers of the research questions and to achieve the research objective. Quantitative secondary data has been collected through electoral statistics compiled by the respective governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh; census reports; surveys conducted by various governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs); international organisations; international policy and research institutions, and donor agencies. Qualitative secondary data that include structured and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observation records and field notes, have been gathered from available research materials of governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, international organisations, international policy and research institutions, and donor agencies as well as from individual researchers who had published their research in academic journals or books. Official and other published documents are listed below:

1. Governments reports from different ministries, divisions, departments on gender studies, women's socio-economic and political statuses at national at local levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh
2. Published books from various government ministries, divisions and departments of both countries
3. Published books on social studies, gender, women's studies and gender quotas
4. Data from *Economic Survey of Pakistan*, and *Bangladesh Statistical Survey* on women's socio-economic and political statuses
5. Official documents of both countries such as Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Local Government Plan 2000 (Pakistan), Local Government Reforms 1997 (Bangladesh)
6. Reports and evaluations of various development institutions in both countries such as Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Centre for Policy Dialogue Dhaka and Centre of Social Studies Dhaka
7. Academic journal articles and newspaper reports
8. Reports of various donor agencies in both countries such as ADB, CIDA, DFID, EC, GTZ, JICA, NORAD, SIDA, UNDP, UNESCAP, UNIFEM, USAID and WB
9. Reports and evaluations of international research and development organisations such as World Economic Forum, ILO, IFAD

5. Socio-Economic and Political Status of Women in Pakistan

This Chapter on the status of women in Pakistan is divided into four sections. The first section presents a brief overview of the geography, socio-economic conditions and political features of Pakistan. The second section describes the socio-economic conditions of the women of Pakistan. The third and fourth sections present the historical perspective of the political participation of women at national and local levels in Pakistan. The contents of this Chapter provide the context for the presentation and analysis of detailed empirical data in Chapters seven, eight and nine.

Overview of Pakistan

Pakistan is a country of 170 million people, out of which women comprise 49% of its population (Population Census 1998). Pakistan is the sixth most populous country of the world and second in the Islamic world after Indonesia. In terms of area, Pakistan is the 36th largest country of the world. Its area is 796,096 sq km and it is located in South Asia, in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent. Pakistan shares its boundaries with India on the east, China on its north-east, Afghanistan on the north-west and Iran is on the south-west. It has a coastline of 1046 kms in the south, which 770km lies in the province of Baluchistan and about 276 km in the province of Sindh. It has magnificent mountain ranges (Karakoram, Hindukush,) deserts (Thar and Thal), a plateau (Pothohar), five major rivers with the world's largest irrigation system. Figure 5.1 indicates Pakistan's location in South Asia.

Figure 5.1: Geographical Position of Pakistan:

Source: http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/lgcolor/pkcolor.htm

Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan are the four provinces of Pakistan. In addition to four provinces, there are four administrative areas that are Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and Gilgit Baltistan. Balochistan is the largest province in terms of area and Punjab is the most populous province. Figure 5.2 shows the administrative boundaries of Pakistan.

Figure 5.2: Administrative Boundaries of Pakistan

Source: http://pakistan360degrees.contentcreatorz.com/administrative-divisions-of-pakistan/

Pakistan achieved independence in 1947, along with India from British colonial rule. Ideally, Pakistan is a federal parliamentary republic with a bicameral legislature but, in practice, different military regimes ran autocratic rules for nearly half of the years of the country's existence. Islamic Republic of Pakistan's national language is Urdu while official language is English. Islam is the state religion with 96% of the population. President is the head of state who is elected by electoral college of the national assembly, senate and four provincial assemblies. Prime Minister is the head of government. He is member of the lower house and is appointed by the largest party in the assembly. Pakistan's legislature is bicameral. Upper house is called senate and lower house is called national assembly. There are four provincial assemblies in Pakistan. Table 5.1 presents distribution of seats in national assembly, senate and four provincial assemblies.

Table 5.1: Composition of National Assembly, Senate and Four Provincial Assemblies

Legislature	**Senate (Upper House)**	**National Assembly (Lower House)**
Bicameral i.e. senate and national assembly	• 100 members • General seats = 66 • Seats reserved for women = 17 • Seats reserved for technocrats = 17	• 342 members • 272 through direct elections • Reserve seats for Women = 60 • Seats reserved for religious minorities = 10

Provincial Assemblies				
Province	**Total No. of Seats**	**General Seats**	**Seats Reserved for**	
			Women	**Non Muslims**
Punjab	371	297	66	8
Sindh	168	130	29	9
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	124	99	22	3
Balochistan	65	51		3

Source: GoP Website

The composition of the National Assembly is specified in Article 51 of the Constitution. There is a total of 342 seats in the National Assembly. Of these, 272 are filled by direct elections. In addition, the Pakistani Constitution reserves 10 seats for religious minorities and 60 seats for women to be filled by proportional representation among parties with more than 5% of the vote. Since 2006, there have been 72 women members in the National Assembly. Members of the National Assembly are elected by the people in competitive multi-party elections, to be held, at

most, five years apart. According to Article 62 of the Constitution, candidates must be citizens of Pakistan and not less than eighteen years of age (GoP Website).

The senate of Pakistan is the upper house of the bicameral parliament. The senate consists of 100 members most of whom are indirectly elected by the members of four provincial assemblies. Elections are held every three years for one half of the senate and each senator has a term of six years. If the office of the president of Pakistan becomes vacant, or the president is unable to perform his functions, the chairman of the senate acts as president until a president is elected (GoP Website).

Pakistan has four provincial assemblies and a local government system in place. Members of provincial assemblies are directly elected while a 17% quota has been reserved for women in each provincial assembly since 2002. The chief minister is the leader of the house.

Economically Pakistan is a poor country with only $1051 GDP per capita per annum and $369.70 per person GNI. The literacy rate is only 57% for the total population while for women, it is even less at 45%. It is ranked among countries of medium human development according to the *Human Development Report 2010*. Socio economic indicators of Pakistan are given are Appendix 1.

Pakistani society is divided into numerous castes and tribes making it culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse. Rural living is dominated by feudal culture where landlords expect considerable control over their tenants (Ismael 2008). They treat their poor tenants and their families as slaves tied in metaphorical chains and shackles. A clear distinction between the rich and the poor or 'haves and have nots' is also highly visible in urban areas. Patriarchy in Pakistani society is evident everywhere. The overwhelming majority of the population is Muslim but

Islamic laws are often interpreted according to the personal advantages of the influentials. Customary norms and cultural traditions are deeply entrenched in society and prevail over Islamic and state laws (Kukreja 2003; Zia & Bari 1999). It is not an exaggeration to say that, in Pakistan, the life of an ordinary person, especially a woman is characterised by multiple inequalities and injustices. While in other part of the civilised world, people usually look towards the state and government to come to their rescue or support in cases of distress and turmoil, the same does not apply to Pakistan (Yaqub 2010). On the contrary, women in Pakistan try to conceal their misfortunes from government officials and state machinery in the belief that it would further add to their difficulties.

Socio-Economic Status of Women in Pakistan

It would not be an overstatement to call Pakistani society 'gender biased' in every aspect of life. It clearly pronounces a division of labour between males and females. Males are mostly considered responsible for earning the income to supply the needs of their families. Females are bound to live a life within '*chadar and chardiwari*[5]*'* (dress code and four walls of a house). This role differentiation confers on women a secondary citizen status. Despite formal legal, statutory and constitutional safeguards, Pakistani women are informally considered inferior to men in a country where society rather than the state has persistently demonstrated the capacity to make and impose the rules that govern everyday life. Families and society tend to prefer a male child over a female child (Majid & Kabir 2008). Girls are perceived to leave the parental home after marriage and as such are not considered as a resource to increase family income. They are

[5] A general term widely used in Pakistan to describe the domain of women

mostly trained for household chores and mentally prepared for reproduction and raising children. This makes them feel subordinate to men.

The life cycle of an average Pakistani woman revolves around the wishes of her male family members. She is generally not allowed to make decisions about her own life. Everyone in Pakistani society dreams for a male child (UNESCAP 2000; Yazdani 2003b). The discriminatory attitude of society towards a girl child starts right from her birth or in many cases even before her birth when the family comes to know that their new child is a baby girl. Cases are reported where the expecting mothers of baby girls are forced into having miscarriages (Amnesty International 2008). A girl child does not enjoy all rights in Pakistan. She is forced to marry without consideration of her consent. She works as a domestic servant or cottage industry worker. She has no equal opportunity in society as compared to male children. She has limited opportunities for primary and secondary education. From the time of conception until her old age, a female remains under threat; the threat of deprivation; the threat of malnourishment; the threat of poverty; the threat of over-work; the threat of marriage without consent; the threat of unwilling countless pregnancies; and the threat of sudden death on the wishes and whims of male masters. Women are brainwashed to be inferior and dependent on men (Shaheed et al. 1998; Naz 2001; Zia & Bari 1999).

Women are often believed to be the commodity of their fathers and brothers before marriage and husbands after marriage. Such customary norms are so deeply embedded that not only men but also women have become gender blind with the passage of time. The only position of power and authority open for most women is the position of mother-in-law (Frankl 2004). When they reach that position, mothers-in-law have a tendency to argue that 'because I have suffered, you shall not escape' (Forsslund 1995, p. 19). They start cursing their daughters and giving preference to

their sons. Females internalise the view that they are born to please their male masters. The majority of women believe that it is the prerogative of men to take decisions about their lives.

> In novels, commercial films and TV plays, women are self denying mothers who sacrifice themselves for the sake of their children (in most cases their sons). A Good wife is a self sacrificing person who suffers all the miseries imposed on her by her in-laws and her husband....Women who show any sort of independence of mind are always portrayed negatively. (Khawar & Shaheed 1987, p.24)

Although, in this quote Mumtaz and Shaheed (1987) were describing the expected roles, attitudes and behaviour of the women of Pakistan in 1987, their observations also fit present-day Pakistani society. Such attitudes of society towards women have given rise to many abominable traditions, which although legally prohibited are still widely prevalent in society and recorded in official reports and other literature (Amnesty International 1998; 2000; 2006, 2008; NCSW 2007, 2008, 2009; UN 2009; MoWD 2005; Wahid 2007; (Farooqi 2010; Jilani 1992; Ali 1995; Yazdani 2003b). Some of these appalling traditions are described below:

Domestic violence is a common phenomenon of almost every household of Pakistan (Amnesty International 2008). The most common forms of violence among rural and low income families are physical tortures and abusive language against women, while men of upper class and high income families mostly concentrate on psychological and emotional torture. Wife battering is rarely considered as a crime in Pakistan, unless it takes a brutal form. Many instances have been notices where, women are held responsible for giving birth to girls and are severely tortured (Yazdani 2003b). From time to time, such domestic violence takes the form of acid throwing and burning new brides for lack of dowry.

Honour Killing, also called '*karo kari'* in some local languages is the practice of killing female members of the family in the name of honour, on the grounds that the person has brought

dishonour to the family by selecting her life partner by herself or by eloping with someone against the wishes of her family. According to Amnesty International 2006, every year almost 150-200 girls are killed in interior Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the name of honour.

Wanni is prevalent in all four provinces of Pakistan and involves girl children being given as compensation to resolve family and tribal feuds (Farooqi 2010). Girls are also given as blood money to settle crimes such as murder and can be sexually, physically and psychologically tortured. Nine or ten years old girls can be married to 60 or 70 years old men. The life of a girl can become a nightmare as she may be treated worse than a slave (Wahid 2007). In addition to *wanni*, there are also similar traditions prevalent in different parts of the country by the name of '*dundee', 'vana', and 'swara'*.

Sexual harassment is the most common form of violence adopted by Pakistani men against females (NCSW 2009). Working women of non-officer rank such as nurses, sales girls, police constables and school teachers are often victims of sexual harassment. They are frequently demoralised or presented before the society as pursuing lust and pleasure. They are the focus of sexual and vulgar conversation and attract many derogatory jokes. Rape is the most widespread violent act against women in Pakistan but the majority of incidents are not reported due to the shame attached to the victim and her family (NCSW 2007). Custodial violence is another common form of crime against women, but is seldom reported because of the direct involvement of police and other law enforcement agencies in these heinous crimes (Amnesty International 1998, 2002, 2006, 2008). Child marriages[6], *watta sitta*[7], dowry[8], forced marriages, no share of

[6] Marriage of children before reaching the age of adolescence

[7] Marriage of brother and sister of one family to brother and sister of another family against the will of bride and grooms

[8] Brides are expected to bring enough money and household things as gifts to grooms and their families

inheritance to females, and marriages to Quran[9] are some other discriminatory traditions that are still prevalent in many parts of the country despite legal prohibition (UN 2009). The government has started to record and take actions against these gruesome instances. However, the number of such incidents formally recorded is still alarming as shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Extent of Violence against Women in Four Provinces of Pakistan (2005-2009)

Type of Crimes	No. Of Cases in 2005		No. Of Cases in 2006	No. Of Cases in 2007	No. Of Cases in 2008	No. Of Cases in 2009
Domestic Violence	**Murder**	1075	1084	1078	1005	1104
	Beating	1017	1141	848	770	907
	Other	313	536	435	408	329
Honour Killing	**—**	321	339	359	386	313
Burning	**Acid**	22	12	19	21	25
	Stove	18	17	10	10	6
Wanni	**—**	2	17	6	9	9
Sexual Violence	**Gang Rape**	174	131	235	N/A	187
	Rape	1713	1743	1515	1895	2092
	Custodial	7	7	80	3	N/A
	Incest	41	34	34	47	8
Harassment at Work Place	**Physical**	81	156	82	96	119
	Sexual	39	149	145	207	147
	Psychological	8	30	28	2	1
Any other violence not listed Above		2214	2669	2562	2715	2442
Total		7045	8065	7436	7802	7689

Source Gender Crime Cell, National Police Bureau, Islamabad

[9] In a simple ceremony, girls are given in the protection of the Holy Book. They are declared pious and untouchables. The act is un-Islamic. It is done to avoid giving girls their share of inheritance to their husbands.

Table 5.2 shows the number of cases of murder, acid throwing, gang rapes, physical and sexual violence in the workplace and stove burnings (women set on fire in incidents made to look like kitchen accidents) from 2005-09. It clearly indicates that there has not been any significant decrease in the reported number of crimes against women. Indeed, there has been increase in reported cases of murders, acid throwing, gang rapes, rapes, physical and sexual harassment at the workplace. The extent of unreported incidents is still difficult to record. This is because of the mistrust of the police and the influence of deep-rooted cultural norms.

Inconsistent with this grim scenario of violence against females, a few Pakistani women became the source of pride and inspiration for the entire nation. Benazir Bhutto (two times prime minister of Pakistan) carried the dual prestige of being the youngest female prime minister in the world in 1988 and the first female prime minister of a Muslim nation. Pakistani women have also proved their excellence in every walk of life. They are not only notable in politics, government administration, business, fashion, entertainment, education, science and sports but have also performed great services in the police, military, air force and navy. Namira Salim was the first Pakistani and Asian astronaut in 2008, Dr Fehmida Mirza, the first female speaker of parliament in the Islamic world, and Arfa Karim, the youngest Microsoft certified professional (just 9 years old when she achieved this) are examples of female achievement. But they constitute a meagre portion of the female population of Pakistan. Most of the notable women come from urban areas and belong to the elite that constitutes a very small portion of the total population of Pakistan. The majority of women in Pakistan's rural and urban areas are still living in deplorable conditions. The government of Pakistan has passed numerous domestic laws and ratified many international conventions to protect the rights of these women but the implementation of these instruments has been poor (Khan 2009).

The laws passed at national level include:

- The Law of Inheritance of Property 1951
- The Muslim Laws Ordinance 1961
- Pakistan Family Court Act, 1964
- Pakistan Family Court Rules 1965
- Dowry and Bridal Gifts (Restrictions) Act 1976
- Dowry and Bridal Gift (Restrictions) Rules 1976
- Amendment of 1951 Citizenship Act in 2000, providing nationality for children of foreign spouses
- Criminal Law Amendment Act 2004 to facilitate prosecution of honour killing
- Protection of Women Act 2006

Various articles of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973 enhance the status of women in Pakistan such as Article 25 of the Constitution that guarantees that there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone and that the state shall make provisions for the protection of women; Articles 26, 27, 34, 35 and 37 provide non-discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, race, sex and in getting employment; Article 37 of the Constitution also encourages the promotion of social justice and the eradication of social evils and amendments in Articles 51 and 59 of the 1973 constitution under the Legal Framework Order increase women's political participation in national and provincial assemblies.

On the international front, the commitments of the government of Pakistan include:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- The Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 1985

- The Program of Action, International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo) 1994 (ICPD)
- World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen) 1995
- Beijing Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW (ratified in 1995)
- International Convention on Economic and Social Rights (ratified in 2008)
- International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ratified in 2008)
- International Convention Against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified in 2008)

As has been demonstrated, Pakistan has signed a series of laws, conventions, treaties, platform for action and resolutions for the development and empowerment of women, not only at the domestic level abut also at the international level to promote its image as a responsible global citizen. Unfortunately, the implementation of these policies has remained poor. The prevalence of a weak justice system with an incompetent and corrupt police force have prevented women from seeking justice. In a system where women are considered commodities and men's social lives are dictated by chauvinism, the suppression of cases concerning honour killings is a logical consequence—the perpetrators must be sheltered and the honour of the family preserved. Such a situation has left women underprivileged, struggling to achieve the basic necessities of life and unable to develop their capabilities. This is evident from the status of Pakistani women indicated in Table 5.3 with data extracted from UNDP's *Human Development Report 2010* (UNDP 2010).

Table 5.3: Gender Inequality Patterns, Empowerment and Demographic Trends in Pakistan

<table>
<tr><th colspan="10">Gender Inequality Index (GII) (2010)</th></tr>
<tr><th>Rank in 2009</th><th>GII Value (0-1)</th><th>Maternal Mortality Ratio in 2009</th><th>Adolescent Fertility Rate in 2009</th><th>Seats in Parliament (%) in 2009</th><th colspan="2">Population with At Least Secondary Education (% Ages 25 and Older) in 2009</th><th colspan="2">Labour Force Participation Rate (%) in 2009</th><th>Births Attended by Skilled Health Personnel (%) in 2009</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">112 out of 137</td><td rowspan="2">0.721</td><td rowspan="2">320 maternal deaths per 100,000 births</td><td rowspan="2">45.7 (of births per 1000 women aged 15-19)</td><td rowspan="2">21.2</td><th>Female</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Male</th><td rowspan="2">39</td></tr>
<tr><td>23.5</td><td>46.8</td><td>21.8</td><td>86.7</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="10">Empowerment and Demographic Trends</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Satisfaction with Freedom of Choice (% Satisfied) in 2009</th><th colspan="2">Overall Life Satisfaction (0=least Satisfied, 10=Most satisfied)</th><th colspan="2">Total Fertility Rate (Births per Women) in 2009</th><th colspan="4">Sex Ratio at Birth (Male Births per 100 Female Births) in 2009</th></tr>
<tr><th>Total</th><th>Female</th><th>Total (2006-09)</th><th>Female (2006-09)</th><th>1990-95</th><th>2010-15</th><td colspan="4" rowspan="2">105.8</td></tr>
<tr><td>31</td><td>40</td><td>5.4</td><td>5.5</td><td>5.7</td><td>3.6</td></tr>
</table>

Source: UNDP 2010

According to UNDP (2010, p. 19)

> Gender Inequality Index' reflects women's disadvantage in three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment and labour market. The index shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievement in these dimensions. It ranges from 0, which indicates women and men fare equally to 1, which indicates that women fare as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions.

As shown in Table 5.3, standing at 0.721 in 2009, Pakistan's Gender Inequality Index is very high. This indicates the poor performance of Pakistan in gender equality in comparison with other countries. It ranks at 112 out of 137 and its score on the gender equality index stands close to the bottom which means that women of Pakistan fare deplorably in its entire measured dimension. In Pakistan, the maternal mortality ratio stands at 320 per 100,000 births. Breast, cervical, ovarian and colon cancers are some other leading causes of women's deaths in Pakistan. Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF), Recto Vaginal Fistula (RVF), loss of uterus, pelvic inflammatory diseases are the major pregnancy related complications faced by Pakistani women (JPGMC 2010). The Table shows that only 39% births are attended by skilled personnel leading to another major cause of death during pregnancy. Pakistan is one of the few countries of the world where male births outnumber female births. This indicated the cultural practice of Pakistani society where the news of having a baby girl is received with grief and instances are reported where effort are made to abort the birth of a baby girl (Yazdani 2003a). UNDP reporting on gender inequality on Pakistan is backed up by the World Economic Forum 2010, which ranks Pakistan 56 among 58 countries in eliminating the gender gap. Table 5.3 also shows literacy and labour force participation rates of women. These are further elaborated in the tables 5.4 and 5.5.

Table 5.4: Female Literacy Rate and Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Pakistan

Gender/Population Type/GPI	Literacy Rates (Percentages) at the Age of 16 Years and Above		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Male	67	69	69
Female	42	44	45
Both	55	56	57
Rural	45	49	48
Urban	72	71	74
GPI	0.63	0.64	0.65

Source: (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2010, p. 146)

According to UNDP (2010, p. 20):

> Gender Parity Index (GPI) is the ratio of female enrolment to male enrolment. A GPI of more than 1 indicates that, in proportion to every male in the school, there is more than 1 female.

Table 5.4 shows that the overall literacy rate for Pakistan at the age of 16 years and above in 2008-09 stood at 57%, out of which the male literacy rate was 69% while the female literacy rate was considerably lower at 45%. Female illiteracy was particularly evident in rural areas where girls are often trained for household chores rather than being enrolled in schools (NCSW 2010). While more women are opting for higher education and joining nontraditional form of professions such as the police, armed forces, engineering and business, many girls are being deprived of education in rural and conservative areas. This is mainly due to the peoples' belief that religion does not permit secular education for women other than the Quran and *Hadith* (sayings of the Holy Prophet) and religion prohibits women to come out of *chadar and chardiwari* (home boundaries). People in rural areas of Pakistan practice religion more than the urban population and they have total faith in whatever their local *maulvi's* (priest) sermons without checking their authenticity. The situation is particularly serious in the provinces of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan where the majority of the population believe in a *Taliban* brand of Islam. In the Swat Valley, (a big valley in the territory of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), more than 200 government schools were destroyed by *Taliban* forces who declared them un-Islamic (AF 2001a).

Women' deprivation in Pakistan is not only valid for literacy but is also found in other fields such as labour force participation rates. Table 5.5 shows the percentage of females in the labour force in urban and rural Pakistan in terms of crude activity participation rates and refined activity participation rates.

Table 5.5: Labour Force Participation Rates in Pakistan (2008-2009)

Distribution According to Population		**Crude Activity Participation Rates (%)**	**Refined Activity Participation Rates (%)**
Overall	Male	49.3	69.3
	Female	14	20.7
	Total	32.2	45.7
Urban Population	Male	49.9	66.3
	Female	6.2	10.1
	Total	28.9	39.3
Rural Population	Male	49.1	71
	Female	17.9	26.4
	Total	33.8	49.2

Source: (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2010, p. 248)

The World Bank defines labour force participation as,

> Labour force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period (WB Website Making World Free of Poverty).

Crude activity participation rate is the currently active population expressed as a percentage of the total population in Pakistan while the refined activity participation rate is the currently active population expressed as a percentage of the population over 10 years and above (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2010). Refined activity participation rates enable comparison with other countries. Table 5.5 indicates that in Pakistan only 14% women are part of the labour force as compared to 49.3 % men. In urban areas, the situation is more extreme as only 6.2 % women are part of the labour force as compared to 17.9 % in rural areas. This is not because in agricultural areas, women have more access to income-generating activities. Most rural women are involved in agriculture and see it as a part of their normal household chores for which no remuneration or daily wages are expected. Pakistan Employment Trends for Women (UN 2009, p. vi) argues that for the promotion of gender equality, 'full and productive employment for all including women and young people is very important' but in case of Pakistan, there is still a wide gap between labour force participation rates between men and women. This is because, in a male dominated country like Pakistan, women face multiple challenges when seeking work in specific economic sectors that women generally earn one third less than their male counterparts is a major factor leading male family members to discourage them from finding a job. If they are able to get a job, they do so in less productive economic sectors and in activities that can lack basic rights and social protection. Tables 5.6 and 5.7 show employment status by sex and sectors.

Table 5.6: Employment Status by Sex in 2008-2009 in Pakistan (As Percentage of Total Population)

Type of Employment	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Employees	39.6	21.8	35.8
Self-employed	38.7	13.1	33.3
Unpaid family helpers	20.2	65.0	29.7
Employers	1.5	0.1	1.2
Total	100	100	100

Source: (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2010, p. 249)

Table 5.6 illustrates the gloomy scenario of women as employees, self-employed and employers. The data show that only 0.1% women are employers, 13.1% are self-employed and only 21.8% women are employed. A large proportion of the female population is comprised of unpaid family helpers – 65% of women. An unpaid family worker works without any remuneration for a small business or enterprise operated by one of his/her family members. The majority of women in this category do this as an essential element of house-hold chores, which means this is obligatory for them. Self-employment is where there is no fixed salary or remuneration for the work depends on the net income of the work done. The data show that 13.1 percent women are self employed. It is important to mention that self employment for women is seldom on a large scale. Rather it involves women who earn their living through activities such as stitching, embroidery and running a small shop (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2010).

Table 5.7 Employment by Sectors in 2008-2009 in Pakistan (As Percentage of Employed Population)

Sector	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Agriculture	37.3	74.0	45.1
Manufacturing	13.3	11.9	13.0
Construction	8.3	0.4	6.6
Transport	6.6	0.2	5.2
Services	11.1	11.6	13.66
Others	2.9	0.3	0.10
Total	100	100	100

Source: Economic Survey of Pakistan 2010, p. 250

Table 5.7 indicates that agriculture is still the largest sector for the employment of females in Pakistan and 74% of females in employment are in agriculture. It is not clear from the statistics as to how many women in the agriculture sector are unpaid family helpers. After this snapshot of the socio-economic status of Pakistani women, it is appropriate to turn to politics to take a historical perspective on women's access to legislative assemblies in a country where patriarchy rules.

Historical Perspective on Women's Political Empowerment at National Level

Pakistan was established in the name of Islam. During the freedom movement, not only Muslim men but also women played vital roles for which the credit goes to prominent visionary Muslim leaders of that era. These include Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Ali Johar, Shaukat Ali, Amir Ali and father of the nation, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Quaid-i-Azam (literally the biggest leader; an epithet awarded to him for his leadership qualities) staunchly believed that the dream of an independent Pakistan could not be fulfilled without the active support of women (Shahnaz 1999). It was his belief that obliged Muslim women to cross the four

walls of their homes, enter the public domain and actively support their men in the struggle for an independent Pakistan. Muslim women participated actively in holding processions, strikes and agitation (Gardezi 1997). It was due to their continuous efforts along with their male counterparts that provided impetus to the movement for an independent Pakistan.

Quaid-i-Azam's accomplishment of bringing Muslim women of the subcontinent on to the streets to actively engage in politics was extraordinary, unparalleled and a complete social transformation from the prevailing norms (Khan 2001a). Culturally and socially, it had previously been next to impossible for Muslim women to step out of their homes to help turn a 'mad man's dream'[10] into reality. Quaid's family itself created a precedent in the form of his sister, Fatima Jinnah, whose presence at political meetings and public gatherings was a clear communiqué to her fellow women to decline the conventional role of wife, sister or mother confined within the home (Shahnaz 1999). Although Quaid's stance on working women earned him the title of *Kafir-i-Azam* (biggest atheist) from religious dogmatists, it was his own understanding of Islam that kept him steadfast in the pursuit of the educational and political development of women.

It was though the efforts of such leaders of Pakistan's independence movement that the British colonial government, first acknowledged the need to introduce some legislative measures to safeguard the rights of women in politics (Noman 1988). In *Government of India ACT 1935*, an affirmative measure was introduced for the first time, to ensure female presence in the central legislative assembly. The Act awarded a 3% reserved seats quota for women in response to a demand for a 10% quota for women. Even though the demand was not fully acknowledged, women's right of representation in parliament through special seats was recognised for the first

[10] The critics of Quaid used to translate his vision for an inependent Pakistan as a 'mad man's dream'.

time (Ikramullah 1998). As a result, after independence, the first constituent assembly of Pakistan had two women representatives, Jahanara Shahnawaz and Shaista Ikramullah. Fatima Jinnah also maintained a high public profile by pioneering the women's relief committee for the rehabilitation and settlement of refugees in the newly born Pakistan (Ali 2000).

Begum Ikramulah and Jahanara Shahnawaz through their commitment to raise the status of Pakistani women achieved great success in 1951 securing the passage of the law of property inheritance including agricultural land for women (Waseem 1994). The passage of this law was significant in the sense that while Islam had given this right to Muslim women fourteen hundred years earlier, Muslim men of the subcontinent had continuously been denying this right. This was mainly due to their wish of retaining properties within the family domain[11]. It was a tribute to the determined action of the new women representatives to get the law passed by an assembly which was largely populated by male chauvinists (Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987).

The first constituent assembly of Pakistan was dissolved in 1954 and the two provincial assemblies of East and West Pakistan served as the electoral college to select the new constituent assembly. The formation of this assembly was gender biased as no woman member was elected. Thus, the first Constitution of Pakistan (1956) was drafted by an assembly which contained no women (Sayeed 1978; Talbot 1998; Callard 1957). Despite this, the 1956 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan acknowledged the principle of female suffrage and reserved seats for women at a minimal at 3% at all governmental levels. Article 44(2)(1) of the Constitution provided for reservation of 10 seats for women in the national assembly for a period of 10 years

[11] There is a cultural norm in Pakistan and other countries of the region (India, Bangladesh, Nepal), that after a woman's marriage, her property is used by her husband and in-laws. After her death, her children and husband become the heirs of that property. In this way, property is transferred from one family to another.

equally divided between East and West Pakistan. In addition, women were given the dual right of vote which meant they could cast votes both for general seats as well as for reserved seats (Sayeed 1980).

The 1956 Constitution was abrogated in 1958 by a military dictator General Ayub Khan. The national assembly was dissolved and for the next ten years (1958-1968), the country was under autocratic rule. The 1956 Constitution was replaced by another in 1962 which abolished direct elections for the central and provincial assemblies and introduced indirect elections through easily manipulated representatives from 80,000 basic democrats[12] (Jalal 1991; Talbot 1998; Burki 1980). The 1962 Constitution abolished the female suffrage and introduced a new system of indirect selection of women for reserved seats. A quota of 2.75% was fixed for women at the national level and 5% at the local level (eight women in the national assembly and five in each provincial assembly). Assemblies were to elect women representatives on a party basis and six women were selected to be members of the national assembly as a result of reserve seats. These six women were actually not representing women's and championing women issues in the assembly but rather were token appointments expected to act just implement the directives of their male political bosses (Sayeed 1980).

The next three years witnessed an important movement towards women's empowerment in the history of Pakistan. Fatima Jinnah, the sister of Quaid-i-Azam decided to contest the 1965 presidential election. She was the leading opponent of General Ayub Khan. The combined

[12] General Ayub Khan introduced a system of Basis Democracy in 1959 which was a mix of selection and election of 80,000 basic democracies at local government level. These basic democracies formed Electoral College to elect the President, and national and provincial assemblies. This was an easily manipulated system as the basic democracies were largely selected rather than elected.

opposition parties including *Jamat-i-Islami* (Islamic party) favoured the candidature of Fatima Jinnah. Indeed, in 1965, all religious parties supported a woman to be head of state but in 1988 Benazir Bhutto was severely opposed by the same religious parties this time arguing from a greatly revised Islamic perspective that a woman could not be appointed as a head of state or head of government. In 1965, *Jamat-i-Islami* was in the front row of the supporters of Fatima Jinnah while in 1988 *Jamat-i-Islami* was again in the front row but this time with a different philosophy that an Islamic state cannot have a female head of state or head of government. This demonstrates how in Pakistan self-interest uses the same name of religion[13]. Fatima Jinnah received unprecedented support in East and West Pakistan but still could not win[14] (Yazdani 2003b). The elections were reported in the international media to have been highly rigged. Had there been free and transparent elections, Pakistan would have seen first female president in the world as its head of state in 1965.

The 1962 Constitution was abrogated in 1969 and a general election was held in 1970 on the basis of adult franchise 'one person one vote'. Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was the biggest party of West Pakistan and Awami League emerged as the leading party of East Pakistan. None of the parties proposed a female leader to contest the general elections. Nine women contested the elections independently (without a party ticket) but could not succeed (Sayeed 1980; Bilal

[13] *Jamat-i-Islami* is known to have the biggest street power in Pakistan for holding processions, strikes and demonstrations.

[14] Ayub legitimised his essentially unitary presidential constitution (1962), which gave effective state power to the armed forces through the office of the president. The 1962 Constitution explicitly linked the office of the president to the newly created local bodies by declaring the 80,000 Basic Democracies as the Electoral College for the election of the president and national and provincial assemblies. This partly bureaucratic and partly political system was explicitly used for distributing resources and patronage in order "to secure a mandate for Ayub" (Gauhar 1996, p. 84) and to build a constituency for the military regime (Burki 1980).

1981). The 1962 Constitution was then replaced by the 1973 Constitution. By that time, East Pakistan had already become the independent country of Bangladesh. The 1973 Constitution declared all citizens to be equal before the law. It enabled women to enter the prestigious civil service of Pakistan (CSP) and foreign service of Pakistan. It maintained the reserved seats for women and provided ten seats for women for a period of 10 years after the first election or for three consecutive general elections, whichever occurred later. After introduction of the 1973 constitution, the first election was held in 1977, the second in 1985 and the third in 1988, so these reserves seats were no longer available for the fourth general election which was held in 1992.

In 1977, another martial law administrator Zia-ul-Haq arrested and later hanged elected Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (Rizvi 1987; Jalal 1995). The country again fell under the rule of a military dictator for the next 11 years until 1988, when Zia-ul-Haq died in a plane crash. The authoritarian rule of 1977-1988 was the darkest period for the development and empowerment of women in Pakistan. Most female political workers vanished from the scene and the country was completely under male dominance (Jehangir & Jilani 1990; Jalal 1995).

Many kinds of restrictions were imposed on women in the name of Islam, as Zia-ul-Haq manipulated religion to prolong his personal rule. The government introduced several measures to curb women's rights. The 1979 Hadood Ordinance placed women in a highly vulnerable position. This is the penal code law for the punishment of rape, adultery, drinking and murder. For rape charges, women had to produce four witnesses who had seen the act of penetration (Jilani 1992). For the charge of adultery, there was a punishment of 100 whips in public. The law determined different criteria of adulthood for boys and girls making young girls liable to harsher adult penalties at a younger age than boys for offences relating to extra marital sex, rape and

adultery (Jehangir & Jilani, 1990). In 1980, women were banned from participating in all spectator sports. The government reduced the quota of women in the public service and unmarried women were barred from joining the foreign service of Pakistan. To appease the rising international criticism, the Zia government took some positive measures. Article 51(4) of the 1973 constitution was amended and the quota provision of 10 reserve seats for women was increased to 20. But the country did not witness any significant improvement in the status of women until his death in 1988.

The country was under democratic rule from 1988-1998, twice under the premiership of Benazir Bhutto, the first female prime minister of the Muslim world, and twice under the rule of Nawaz Sharif but there still were no substantial improvements in women's development and empowerment. The 20 reserved seats, introduced by Zia, lapsed after the election of 1988 (Shaheed 1994). Neither democratic prime ministers revived the system of reserved seats for women. These seats were later introduced and their number increased to sixty by another military dictator, General Pervez Musharaf, who overturned the elected government of Nawaz Sharif in 1998 through a coup d'état.

The military government of General Pervez Musharaf took the lead in introducing measures for the development and empowerment of women though constitutional amendments which successive elected democratic governments from 1988-1998 failed to initiate. Cheema, Khwaja and Qadir (2005) argued that the rationale for these steps was simply to present a democratic appearance to justify the presence of a dictator as head of the state and chief of the army and to appease international pressure by complying with international commitments such as the Beijing Platform for Action 1995, which Pakistan had ratified. Chief Executive's Order No. 7 of 2002, later incorporated in the constitution as amended article 51 (for national assembly) and 106 (for

provincial assemblies), revived the reserved seats for women in the national assembly and increased the number of seats from 20 to 60. Article 59 provided for at least 17 women in the senate' four from each province and one from the capital territory. Table 5.6 shows the distribution of national assembly seats from the four provinces and territories of Pakistan after Chief Executive's Order No. 7 of 2002. The distribution of seats as described below is current practice till to date.

Table 5.8: Distribution of National Assembly Seats from the Four Provinces and Territories of Pakistan

Regions	General Seats	Women's Seats	Reserved Seats for Non Muslims (Nationwide)	Total	Percentage of Women's Seats Out of Total No. of Seats
Baluchistan	14	3	10 Seats are reserved for religious minorities on the basis of proportional representation among parties with more than 5% of the total vote.	17	17.64
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	35	8		43	18.60
Punjab	148	35		183	19.12
Sindh	61	14		75	18.66
Federally Administered Tribal (FATA) Areas	12	--		12	N/A
Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT)	2	--		2	N/A
Total	272	60	10	342	17.54

Source: Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan at http://pakistanconstitution-law.org/article-51-national-assembly/

Table 5.8 shows that in the national assembly of Pakistan, 17.54% seats were reserved for women. Women were also given a 17-20% share of seats in all four provinces, depending on the population of each province. In FATA, no seat was reserved for women because of the cultural traits of tribal areas where women's active participation in politics was regarded as a taboo. Table 5.8 indicates that in the national assembly, 60 seats were reserved for women. The procedure for the nomination of female members for the national assembly was that in the

provinces, political parties would nominate their female representatives on the basis of the percentage of general seats won by them. For example, if a political party secured 100 seats out of 272 general seats comprising 30 from Punjab, 30 from Sind, 5 from Balochistan and 10 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it meant that the party won 20.27% (30 seats) from Punjab, out of the 148 general seats reserved for Punjab. That party would be allowed to nominate 20.27% of the 35 seats reserved for women from the province of Punjab which was equivalent to 7 seats. Table 5.9 shows the allocation of seats in the four provincial assemblies of Pakistan since 2002:

Table 5.9: Distribution of Seats in Four Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan since 2002

Provincial Assemblies	General Seats	Reserved for Women	Non-Muslims	Total	Percentage of Women Seats
Baluchistan	51	11	3	65	16.9
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	99	22	3	124	17.7
Punjab	297	66	8	371	17.8
Sindh	130	29	9	168	17.3

Source: Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan at http://pakistanconstitution-law.org/article-106-constitution-of-provincial-assemblies/

Table 5.9 indicates between 17% and 18% of seats have been reserved for women in each province. The same procedure has been adopted at the provincial level for the allocation of reserved seats for women to different political parties as used at the national level. This means women seats are allocated to political parties according to the proportion of general seats won by a party.

Until now the chapter has presented the historical development of women's political representation in Pakistan. Table 5.10 traces this historical perspective of women's representation by showing the number and percentage of women in the national assemblies of Pakistan between 1947 and 2011.

Table 5.10: Representation of Women in National Assemblies of Pakistan (1947-2011)

No. of Legislature	Tenure of the National Assembly	Total No. of Seats	Women Elected through Direct Election	Women Elected to Reserve Seats	Seats held by Women	
					Number	Percentage
1st	10/08/47-24/10/1954	30	-	-	2	6.7
2nd	02/05/1955-07/10/1958	80	-	-	0	-
3rd	08/06/1962-12/06/1965	156	6	-	6	3.8
4th	12/06/1965-25/03/1969	156	6	-	6	3.8
5th	14/04/1972-10/01/1977	144	6	-	6	4.2
6th	26/03/1977-05/07/1977	210	1	10	11	5.2
7th	20/03/1985-29/05/1988	217	1	21	22	10.1
8th	30/11/1988-06/08/1990	217	4	20	24	11.1
09th	03/11/1990-17/07/1993	217	2	-	2	0.9
10th	15/10/1993-05/11/1996	217	4	-	4	1.8
11th	15/02/1997-12/10/1999	217	6	-	6	2.8
12th	16/11/2002-15/11/2007	342	13	61(one non Muslim seat)	74	21.6
13th	07/02/2008-To Date	342	16	60	76	22.2

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union at http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm, International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) Back ground Paper: Woman Representation in Pakistan at http://www.idea.int/resources/

Table 5.10 clearly shows that post-2000 there has been an enormous increase in the number of female parliamentarians in Pakistan. Another quite obvious feature of the table is that the majority of women in Pakistan are not able to assume positions in assemblies without affirmative measures or quotas. The data clearly indicate that affirmative measures or quotas enabled a jump (from 2% to 22% at national level and to 20% at provincial levels) in women's representation in national and provincial assemblies. But were women able to secure positions in federal and provincial cabinets? Table 5.11 presents the number and percentage of female federal and provincial ministers. It is important to note that at federal level the government party chooses ministers mostly from the lower house but also some from the from senate. At provincial level, ministers are chosen from the provincial assembly. The data indicate only designated ministers and ministers of state at federal and provincial levels. It does not indicate other important positions such as advisors, speaker or deputy speaker. In this connection, the National Assembly of Pakistan appointed the first female speaker of the Islamic world, Dr Fahmida Mirza, in 2008, while the Sindh assembly has a female deputy speaker. The government of Balochistan has appointed five female advisors.

Table 5.11: Proportion of Women in National and Provincial Cabinets in Pakistan (April 2011)

Cabinet	Total No. of Ministers	Women Ministers	
		Number	Percentage
Federal Cabinet	29	2 federal Ministers +1 State Minister (Deputy Minister)	10.34
Punjab	9	0	0
Sindh	45	4	8.8
Baluchistan	42	3	7.1
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	25	1	4

Source: Punjab Assembly at http://www.pap.gov.pk/index.php/members/govt_n_opp/en/0 , Sindh Assembly at http://www.pas.gov.pk/index.php/members/govt_n_opp/en , Balochistan Assembly at http://www.pabalochistan.gov.pk/index.php/home/en, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly at http://www.pakp.gov.pk/index.php/members/govt_n_opp/en/0 , National Assembly of Pakistan at http://www.na.gov.pk/advisor.html

As is obvious from Table 5.11, in Pakistan, the political leaders are still reluctant to appoint women as ministers. At provincial level, the number of female ministers is under 10% while at national level it is just above 10%.

Historical Perspective on Women's Political Empowerment at Local Level in Pakistan

For more than half of the years of its existence Pakistan has been ruled by the military. While military governments have been constantly at loggerheads with national politicians, it was always military dictators who created the local government systems (Cheema et al. 2005; Paracha 2003). Pakistan has experimented with three different local government systems, one in 1958 introduced by General Ayub Khan, the second in 1979 under General Zia-ul-Haq, and the last in 2000 created by General Pervez Musharaff. Each time a new local government system

was introduced, it was completely different in every respect from the previous one (Cheema & Mohmand 2003). Military rulers utilised different forms of local government to legitimise their autocratic rule. The democratic governments that followed authoritarian regimes discontinued or only partially adopted the local government systems of the military rulers. The new local government system which was introduced in 2000 has characteristically become dysfunctional since 2008, immediately after the emergence of democratic government. It is also important to note that with the exception of the last local government reforms of 2000, there were no significant affirmative measures for women in previous local government reforms (only during 1977-88 minor quotas were introduced at local level in three provinces and during 1997-1999, minor quotas were introduced only in Punjab and Baluchistan). Table 5.12 illustrates women's representation at local level from 1947 to date.

Table 5.12: Women's Representation at Local Level in Pakistan: Historical Perspective

Government Tenure	Women's Representation
1947-1958: Various governments	No local government elections held during this period
1958-1968: General Ayub Khan as President	A system of 'basic democracy' was introduced. There was no special representation for women in this local government system used between 1958-1968
1968-1971: General Yahya Khan as President	No special representation was given to women in local government between 1968-1971
1971-1977: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as Prime Minister	No special representation was given to women in local government between 1971-1977
1977-1988 General Zia-ul-Haq as President	10% representation was reserved for women at *tehsil* and district council level for Punjab, Balochistan and Sindh. No female representation was given to NWFP (Khyber pakhtunkhwa)
1988-1990: Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister	No local government elections were held during this period
1990-1993: Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister	No special representation was given to women in local government between 1968-1971
1994-1996:Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister	No local government elections were held during this period
1997-1999: Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister	Only 12.7% female representation was given to Punjab and 25.8% representation was given to Baluchistan. No representation was given to Sindh and NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)
1999 to 2002: Pervez Musharaf as President	33% reservation for women at all levels of local government
2002-2007: Zafar ullah Jamali and Shaukat Azaz as Prime Ministers	33% reservation for women at all levels of local government
2008-to date	33% reservation for women at all levels of local government

Source: Adopted from Yazdani 2003a, p.14

There were no local government elections in Pakistan between 1947-58 (Tinker 1968; Rizvi 1976). Since 1958, local government elections have been held six times. Women's representation never exceeded 10% until 1997 when it was fixed at 12.7% for Punjab and 25.8% for Baluchistan. It is interesting to note that although the country twice had a female PM, Benazir Bhutto, no attempt was made by her governments to revive or increase the women's seats at the local level. The Musharaf government increased women representation not only on the national and provincial level but also at the local level through the Local Government Act 2000. A 33% representation was reserved for women in all three tiers of the local government, i.e. at union, *tehsil* and district council level. The distribution of seats at all three levels of local government is given in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13: Women's Seats at Local Government Level in Pakistan's Local Government Plan 2000

Union Council Level					
Total Seats	**Muslim Seats Reserved for Women**	**Worker and Peasant Reserved Seats (for Men and Women**	**General Muslim Seats for Men and Women**	**Seats for Minorities**	**Workers and Peasant Reserved Seats (for Women)**
21	4	4	8	1	2
1 *Nazim* (Mayor) Through Direct Election and 1 *Naib Nazim* (Deputy Mayor) Through Direct Election					
Tehsil/ Town Council level					
All Naib Nazims (Deputy Mayors) of *Tehsil* Council become members of Union Councils. The total strength includess 1 *Nazim* and 1 *Naib Nazim* 33% of seats reserved for women and 5% of seats reserved for peasants and workers 5% of seats reserved for minorities					
District Council Level					
All *Nazims* (Mayors) of *Tehsil* council become members of District councils The total strength Include 1 *Nazim* and 1 *Naib Nazim* 33% seats reserved for women 5% seats reserved for peasants and workers 5% seats reserved for minorities					

Source: Local Government Plan 2000; ADB 2004a, 2004c; Paracha 2003; Keefer et al. 2005

Table 5.13 indicates that 33% representation on all local government councils has been given to the women of Pakistan. Local Government Plan 2000 also provided opportunities for women from the middle and working class (workers and peasants) to enter local councils for the first time. It had been a tradition in Pakistan that only those women who belonged to the elite were able to get into assemblies, but for the first time two seats were reserved for women from among

peasants and labourers in each union council. Table 5.14 indicates the aggregate number and percentage of women's seats in local government.

Table 5.14: Number and Percentage of Women's Seats Reserved at Local Level in Pakistan

Level	Total No. of Councils	Total No. of Seats	Seats for Women	Women's Seats As a Percentage of Total No. of Seats
Union Council	6,022	126,462	36,066	28.5
Tehsil Council	305	8,192	1,749	21.3
Town Council	30	773	161	20.8
District Council	96	8,806	1,988	22.6
Total		144,233	39,964	27.6

Source: Local Government Plan 2000; Manning et al. 2003

Table 5.14 indicates the total number of seats reserved for women in union, *tehsil*, district and town councils. There are only 30 town councils for big cities in Pakistan and their functions and modalities are same as *tehsil* councils. Table 5.14 indicates that the percentage of women's seats in union, *tehsil*, town and district councils is not 33% as is provided for in Local Government Plan 2000, But is less. This is because 33% is reserved for each individual union, *tehsil*, town and district councils (33% representation has been given to every individual union council out of 6022 union councils and same is true for *tehsil,* town and district councils). But the data shown in last column of the table 5.14 represent the percentage of total number of women seats in total number of union, *tehsil*, town and district councils across Pakistan. At union council level, women are elected directly while at higher levels, the indirect mode is used. Local Government Plan 2000 makes it possible for 39,964 women to enter the political arena. However, men are still not ready to work under female bosses. This is evident from the Table 5.15 which shows the

number of women *nazim* (mayor) and *naib nazim* (deputy mayor) at union, *tehsil* and district council level.

Table 5.15: Number of Female Mayors *(Nazim)* and Deputy Mayors *(Naib Nazims)* at Local Level in Pakistan in 2001 and 2005

Position	2001	2005
Nazim District Council	2	3
Naib Nazim District Council	0	0
Nazim Tehsil Council	1	2
Naib Nazim Tehsil Council	0	0
Nazim Union Council	11	9
Naib Nazim Union Council	2	2

Source: National Reconstruction Bureau, Government of Pakistan

Table 5.15 indicates that in the local government elections 2001 and 2005, a negligible number of women was elected to these positions. The largest number of women could be found at the union level but there were only 11 female *nazims* out of 6022 unions in 2001 and 9 in 2001. Out of the total 96 districts, only three women secured appointment as *nazims.* These figures clearly demonstrate that women faced severe obstacles, especially from male politicians, to secure election to leadership positions in local government councils.

Summary

In summary, it appeared that at independence women had the potential to achieve political equality in the new state of Pakistan. However successive governments did little to advance the cause of women's empowerment and in many instances women were further disempowered and excluded from the public domain. This trend has been partially reversed with the adoption of gender quotas allowing unprecedented numbers of women to be elected to legislative bodies at all levels of government. This has opened up not only an enormous political space but also

offered strategic opportunity for women to have an impact on setting and implementing government agendas at local and national levels. Despite seat reservation, however, political participation problems remain (for example lack of women mayors) as several factors continue to constrain women's effective involvement in politics at the local and national levels. These constraints are discussed in detail in chapter seven.

6. Socio-Economic and Political Status of Women in Bangladesh

This chapter on the status of women in Bangladesh is divided into four sections. The first section presents a brief overview of the geography, socio-economic conditions and political features of Bangladesh. The second section describes the socio-economic conditions of the women of Bangladesh. The third and fourth sections present the historical perspective of the political participation of women at national and local levels in Bangladesh. The contents of this chapter provide the context for the presentation and analysis of detailed empirical data in chapter eight.

Overview of Bangladesh

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1971. The majority (about 88%) of the people are Muslim. Bangladesh is the world's second most densely populated country after city state of Monaco having a population of about 160 million people in its 55,598 square kilometres of land (kfw 2006). It is the ninth most populous country of the world. It is located in South Asia, bounded on the west, north and east by India (except for a short stretch on the east where it shares a border with Myanmar) and on the south by the Bay of Bengal (official website of government of Bangladesh). The country is covered with a network of rivers and canals forming a maze of interconnecting channels. Bangladesh gained independence in 1971 after a nine

months prolonged war with West Pakistan (Ahmed 1996). In 1947, the two countries won political independence from the British colonial rule initially to form the country of Pakistan. The Muslim majority areas of Western Punjab, Baluchistan and North West Frontier region combined to make West Pakistan while Eastern Bengal was renamed as East Pakistan in the Constitution of 1956 (Ahmed 1996).

The two halves of Pakistan were neither culturally nor geographically integrated. Pakistan, before 1971, was a composite of diverse ethnic, linguistic, regional and cultural identities, separated by more than 1600 kilometres of Indian territory into West and East Pakistan (Salik 1997). Many unresolved issues between East and West Pakistan including whether Bengali or Urdu should be the national language further increased the tensions between the two parts of the country. From the very inception, people of East Pakistan developed the feeling of being socially discriminated, politically subjugated and economically manipulated by West Pakistanis (Ahmed 1996). The East believed the West, being the seat of the government, monopolised and concentrated economic and political powers in the West and was exercising neo-colonialism on the east. West Pakistan declared Urdu, the majority language of West Pakistan as the National language of both East and West Pakistan. This was the first bone of contention between two parts of the country (Salik 1997). The decision was later reversed in the 1956 constitution in which both Bengali and Urdu were declared as national languages in their respective terrotories but East Pakistan's feelings of discrimination did not disappear. East Pakistan was one of the world's leading producers and exporters of jute. Revenue earned from the export of jute made up a major portion of the country's exchequer. East Pakistanis were of the view that revenue generated from jute was being spent on the development of the West, including planning and development of a new capital, Islamabad, in the late 1950s.

The political tensions between East and West Pakistan reached their peak in the late 1960s. East Pakistan then rebelled against West Pakistan in March 1971 and full-scale war ensued (Salik 1997). On 16 December 1971, the army of West Pakistan had to surrender and East Pakistan emerged as the independent state of Bangladesh. Figure 6.1 shows the geographical position of Bangladesh.

Figure 6.1: Geographical Position of Bangladesh

Source:http://www.google.com.au/imgres?imgurl=http://i.infoplease.com/images/mbanglad.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/bangladesh.html&h=639&w=509&sz=56&tbnid=CriCe97X0gyFGM:&tbnh=90&tbnw=72&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dmap%2Bof%2Bbangladesh%26tbm%3Disch%26tbo%3Du&zoom=1&q=map+of+bangladesh&hl=en&usg=__A-Bw6oXJFBnWOn12Jy6M8rnLQiU=&sa=X&ei=KDYdTofoKNH3mAWfhKjCBw&ved=0CC0Q9QEwAw

Bangladesh is a low-lying, riverine country with a largely marshy jungle coastline of 710 km on the northern littoral of the Bay of Bengal. Formed by a delta plain at the confluence of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers and their tributaries, Bangladesh's alluvial soil is highly fertile, but vulnerable to flood and drought (Islam 2006). Hills rise above the plain only

in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the far southeast and the Sylhet division in the northeast (GoB Website). Bangladesh has a tropical monsoon climate characterised by heavy seasonal rainfall, high temperatures, and high humidity. Natural disasters, such as floods, tornadoes, and tidal bores affect the country yearly (Islam 2006). Bangladesh is also affected by major cyclones, on average 16 times a decade. Administratively, Bangladesh is divided into seven divisions, as is shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Administrative Boundaries of Bangladesh

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bangladesh_divisions_english.svg

Further classification of divisions into districts and other tiers of local government is given in the third section of this chapter. People's Republic of Bangladesh is a Unitary Parliamentary Republic. Its national as well as official language is Bengali. Islam is the state religion with 90% population. President is the head of state and is elected by the parliament. Prime Minister is the head of government. He is directly elected to the parliament and is appointed by the largest party

in the *parliament. Unicameral legislature is called Jatiya Sangsad. Composition of Jatiya Sangsad* is given in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Composition of Bangladesh's Parliament

Legislature	**Jatiya Sangsad (Single House)**
Unicameral (*Jatiya Sangsad*)	• 345 members • 300 general seats • 45 reserve seats for women • Constitutional term of parliament is 5 years • Current parliament is 9th parliament • Last elections held on 29 December2008

Source: Website Bangladesh Parliament

After 40 years of independence, Bangladesh is still regarded as one of the poorest countries of the world. It has a population of 160 million people, out of which 31.5 million people are living beneath the poverty line (World Food Program (WFP) Website). Only 51.6% of its population are able to read and write (BSB 2009). Bangladesh is ranked 129 out of 169 countries in the 2010 Human Development Index (HDI), and 48 out of 81 countries in the 2010 Global Hunger Index. Around 60 million people consume less than the minimum daily recommended amount of food. In addition, WFP describes Bangladesh as one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Increased frequency of natural disasters, such as cyclones, floods and drought have adversely affected development. Coping strategies adopted by the poor like reducing food intake, withdrawing children from school and selling productive assets have increased the vulnerability of low-income households and worsened people's prospects for escaping the poverty cycle (WFP 2010). Socio-economic indicators of Bangladesh are given in Appendix 2.

Socio-Economic Status of Women in Bangladesh

Women comprise 49% of the total population of Bangladesh, but the status of women is much lower than that of men in every walk of life (Begum 2004). Cultural, traditional and an inclination towards a narrow and rigid interpretation of Islamic tenets generally relegate women to a subordinate status. Focused on the private and seclusion, the majority of women in Bangladesh live under a patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal social system (Chowdhury 2000). It is believed not only by the feminist writers but also most of the country's anthropologists, sociologists and analysts that all state, communal and social institutions in Bangladesh endorse patriarchal trends (Begum 2004). This system enforces a rigid division of labour that controls women's mobility, responsibility, liability and even sexuality (Chowdhury 1998). Extreme poverty, hunger, lack of education, ignorance and particular interpretations of religious norms are the root causes for women's subordination in Bangladesh (Chowdhury 2004; Murshid 2004). Women of the upper middle class in urban areas are the only exception. Comparatively, they have better access to health and education facilities due to their better socio-economic status. Such women, less than 5% of the total number of women may challenge some of the negative cultural norms that they consider hamper the assertion of their human rights (Hossain & Clement 2005).

Bangladesh's patrilineal system gives high value to sons as potential providers, bread winners and for the progression of family names. Bangladesh is one of the seven countries in the world in which males outnumber females, a demographic feature strongly suggesting that there is a

problem of missing women[15] (Mirza 2007). Sen argued that in countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the cultural preference for boys, particularly in rural areas, has led to a shocking mistreatment of young girls, if not female infanticide (Oster 2005). Biologically, female babies are stronger. The world average for women to men is roughly 990 women for every 1,000 men. In some regions, such as Western Europe, there are as many as 1,063 women to every 1,000 men. In South Asia, however, the numbers go against the biological norm. In Bangladesh, for every 1,000 men, there are only 945 women (Alam et al. 2005). Census data reported by Hudson and others suggest that more than 2.7 million Bangladeshi women were missing in 2005 (Hudson & Den 2006).

This is primarily the result of son preference, which leads to female sex-selective abortions, relative neglect of girls (compared to boys) in early childhood and abandonment (Hudson & Den 2005). From the beginning of her childhood, a female is socialised to think of herself as inferior to the male child. His entrance into life is preceded by prayers and marked by festivity. He receives preferential treatment and access to education, better nutrition, and health care. His worth is unquestioned and unparalleled in contrast to a female child (SIGI Website). Scarce resources are invested in the sons as they are expected to provide old age security for their parents in the absence of a state social security system. Sons are expected to take responsibility for their natal families and are considered as natural heirs in a patrilineal and patrilocal society (WFP Website). On the other hand, the arrival of a female child is often viewed with depression and desolation. She is usually considered as a burden to be borne. She must conform to the role

[15] In 1990, Nobel Prize laureate Dr. Amartya Sen used the term 'missing' to describe the large number of women in the world who are literally not alive due to family neglect and discrimination (Sen 1990).

prescribed for her by a male-dominated society. She cannot assert herself but must sacrifice her own desires to fulfill the needs of her male family members (SIGI Website).

In Bangladesh, women are generally viewed in terms of their reproductive roles and are given a subsidiary status as economic dependents (CIDA 2001). Societal norms and practices have defined daughters are temporary members of their natal homes (Chowdhury 2003). Since they are perceived as non or low-earning members of the family, daughters have lesser access to education than sons, especially in poor families (Chowdhury 2003). Although noteworthy achievements have been made in female enrolment at the primary level due to government regulations and initiatives,[16]progress has been very slow at secondary level. Girls' enrolment at the primary level has increased from 50% to 80% between 1980-2009 but their drop-out rate is much higher than boys from the secondary level onwards (Mirza 2007). Parents are reluctant to send daughters to secondary school because they fear for their safety, as religion and culture in Bangladesh place chastity and the reputations of unmarried girls as crucial factors in determining their value in the eyes of potential husbands and in-laws (Mirza 2007). As girls are viewed as potential mothers and homemakers, priority is given to their training in domestic chores rather than to their right to education especially at higher levels. For the majority of people residing in rural areas of Bangladesh,

> Raising a daughter is like watering the neighbor's tree; you take all the trouble to nurture the plant, but the fruit goes to someone else (Frankl 2004, p. 38).

[16] A compulsory primary education law (1990) was adopted which required all children to be enrolled in primary school. The law, in the wake of the global 'Education for All' (EFA) initiative of 1990, helped the expansion of primary enrolment, but it was not implemented with sufficient vigour and was not backed up with adequate resources (Ahmed et al. 2007).

The patriarchal society of Bangladesh gives high importance to sexual divisions by rigidly maintaining the gaps between men and women in the institution of family (Islam & Sultana 2006; *Ain O Shalish* website,). Society prescribes particular roles for males and females in a family and other social institutions. A woman's duties include the maintenance of her family as a social institution and as an economic entity. Most importantly, through childbearing and child rearing, she ensures the existence of succeeding generations. The social system of Bangladesh awards the father, or in his absence, the next male kin the status of heading a household. As a result, both economic activities (income, expenditure and savings) and decision-making powers are controlled by men (Islam & Sultana 2006).

In Bangladesh, the institution of the family has a set of rules and regulations for women. Although religion is the most practiced and valued feature of Bangladeshi society, but sometimes family rules contradict religion (Chowdhury 2000). A particular demonstration of these 'rules' occurs when Muslim Bangladeshi women are directed by male family members to waive the right to inherit their fathers' property in favour of brothers or pass control to their husbands or sons. In both cases, women get so called protection from men at the cost of their social, economic and religious rights, thus directly reinforcing a patriarchal tradition (Dil 1985). It is not the case that all the women are ignorant about their rights of inheritance which their Islamic religion has awarded them. A substantial number of women do have the knowledge but they feel reluctance to go against social norms and values. Familial and social condemnation for such action restrain them from demanding their due share in property (Chowdhury 1994). Women adapt themselves according to these intrinsic customary norms in such a manner that they themselves become male oriented with the passage of time. They start cursing their daughters and giving preference to their sons (Frankl 2004).

Women in Bangladesh have a relatively low level of protection in the family context. The country has the highest rate of early marriage in Asia and ranks among the highest worldwide. UNDP (2004) estimated that 48% of all girls between 15 and 19 years of age were married, divorced or widowed. Traditionally, parents marry their daughters young to decrease the economic burden on the household. Since marriage, among other things, transfers guardianship of the bride from her father to her husband, permission for further education, employment, hospitalisation, or any other disposal of a married woman's time outside her conjugal residence is to be sought from her husband (Field 2004; Naved et al. 2006). On the average, a Bangladeshi woman has four pregnancies in her lifetime and she needs to consolidate her position in the new family by giving birth to male children (Chowdhury 2004; Mirza 2007). In general, as head of the household, the husband makes most of the important decisions. By the time she reaches 50 years of age, one woman out of four in Bangladesh is either divorced or widowed (SIGI Website). Socio-cultural norms have discouraged remarriage for widows and divorced women, so single women comprise 90% of the widowed and 94% of the divorced population (BRAC 2009). Abandoned women are yet another category, constituting the majority of the hard-core poor who enter the labour market for survival, as heads of their households (BRAC 2009).

Traditions and social norms limit the ability of Bangladeshi women to achieve financial independence (Mannan 2003). Despite their growing role in agricultural activities such as livestock and poultry rearing, small fisheries and forestry due to various micro-credit facilities, social practices effectively exclude women from any hope of direct access to land, property or other forms of assets (Rahman 2000). Similarly, although national law accords men and women their due rights (according to religious faiths) to access all kinds of properties, women own very few assets (Mannan 2003). Their situation is further impaired by discriminatory inheritance laws

and cultural norms. Bangladeshi women are unlikely to claim their share of family property unless it is offered to them by their male family members (Begum 2004; Rahman 2000). In Bangladesh, women's access to bank loans and other forms of credit is often determined by the demographic composition of their households. Lack of mobility, particularly in rural areas, forces women to depend on male relatives for providing bank guarantees or other such activities (Grameen Bank Website). Several large NGOs provide extensive micro-credit to Bangladeshi women, but there is a growing concern as to whether these women actually retain control over their loans (Grameen Bank Website).

In Bangladesh, women are more disadvantaged than men in terms of access to health care and the quality of nutrition (Hosain & Clement 2005). Life expectancy is lower by almost a year for women (BRAC 2009). Women family members are less likely to receive modern medical care and tend to receive the traditional type of care instead. Despite the fact that maternal mortality has declined from 574 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 320 in 2001, the maternal mortality Ratio (MMR) in Bangladesh remains one of the highest in the world (Mirza 2007). *World Health Statistics* (WHO 2007) reveals that women's low status in society, the poor quality of maternity care services, lack of skilled birth attendants and poor infrastructure contribute to produce the high rate of maternal deaths. According to an estimate of the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS 2007), 12,000-15,000 women die every year from maternal health complications and some 45% of all mothers are malnourished.

Apart from maternal health figures, chronic energy deficiency, low birth weight, protein energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency are all serious problems in Bangladesh (DGHS 2011). Although these affect people of all ages, children, women and female adolescents are the most affected. Anemia caused by iron deficiency among women and adolescent girls is one of the

growing concerns of the government (DGHS 2011). Almost half (49%) the country's women were suffering from anemia in 2007 (BDHS 2007).

Violence against women is another feature of Bangladeshi society. Citizens are accustomed to news of violence against women such as rape, assault, sexual harassment, trafficking and death due to dowry-related incidents (UNESCAP 1995; Kabeer 2001; Ameen 2005). Domestic violence, violence at the workplace, trafficking, sexual abuse and forced prostitution of women and acid throwing are the six broad categories of violence against women in Bangladesh (Koenig et al. 2003). Between 50 and 60% of women in Bangladesh experience some form of domestic violence. One Stop Crisis Centre, a Bangladesh-based NGO that supports women victims of violence estimates that almost 70% of sexual abuse suffered by women occurs within their own homes (OSCC Website). Another NGO, Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF Website), and Chowdhury (2007) indicate Bangladesh has the highest incidence of acid violence in the world. It recorded 267 acid attacks in 2005, 66% of which were against women. An estimated 200 women are murdered each year in Bangladesh when their families cannot pay their dowries (OSCC Website).

The present scourge of women trafficking can be explained by poverty and social disintegration (OSCC Website). The spread of wage employment or bonded labour such as domestic labour, women working in the sex trade, in entertainment (e.g. as camel jockeys), child abuse, and organ trading can be identified as demand factors. Supply factors are the economic situation and social vulnerability (e.g. a poor abandoned woman might give her child for labour more easily than a more affluent woman), and frequent natural disasters, due to which many shelterless and abandoned children and women result. Bangladesh's location with a land border of 4,222 km with India and 288 km with Myanmar facilitates trafficking of women as the border is loosely

patrolled. Common means of trafficking are kidnapping; abduction; marital migration through fake marriages; selling of small children by parents, guardians, and close relatives; selling of wives by their husbands; and deceiving migrant workers (Khan 2001).

Until the start of the 21st century, violence against women was also evident in the rise in the number of trials through the *fatwa* (edicts) in rural areas (CCHR,B 2009; Hussain 2007). Male village elders usually form a *shalish* (tribunal) to settle some local disputes. This traditional custom of excluding women from the rural *shalish* was manipulated by the local *mullahs* (religious leaders) and the local elites to find women guilty of extramarital sexual affairs and other acts (Hussain 2007). In the past, punishments were meted out in accordance with religious laws as interpreted locally in contravention of the existing penal code. Some women were flogged publicly and a few among them committed suicide (Kabeer 1989). But recently, the proclamation of *fatwas* has been controlled to a significant level due to the interventions of various national and international human rights organisations. From 2002, the government of Bangladesh started to compile data on cases of violence against women in order to take actions against these practices. However, the number of such incidents formally recorded is still alarming as shown in Table 6.2:

Table 6.2: Extent of Violence against Women in Bangladesh (2002-2007)

Year	Women Oppression					Girl Child Oppression
	Rape	Acid Throwing	Seriously Injured	Others	Total	
Total	19039	1087	5400	56288	81870	3725
2002	3702	214	1079	11346	17153	535
2003	4118	207	1209	12853	18337	461
2004	2865	191	663	8023	11643	532
2995	2556	183	568	7561	10871	483
2006	2453	145	1205	7421	10622	774
2007	3345	147	676	9084	13244	940

Source: Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2008

Table 6.2 shows the number of cases of rape, acid throwing, seriously injured and cases of oppression against girl children. The 'other' category includes murders, wife battering and women trafficking. It is revealed from the data that the rape is the most common type of violence against women. The trend of rape fluctuated over the years with the highest in 2003. After 2003, the incidence of rape reduced from 2004 to 2006, but increased again in 2007. Acid throwing, seriously injured and other categories have followed the same general trend as rape but girl child oppression has fluctuated over time. During the period 2002 to 2007, the girl child oppression was highest in 2007 with 940 cases while in 2003, less than half this number of cases were registered. These statistics show that, in spite of all the efforts of government and various humanitarian national and international organisations, violence against women is still on the rise in Bangladesh, especially against girl children.

Inconsistent with this grim scenario of violence against women, a few Bangladeshi women became the source of pride and inspiration for the entire nation. Khalida Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wajid have each been two times Prime Minister of Bangladesh. They carry the prestige of being consistently leaders of the house and leaders of the opposition on alternate terms of elected assemblies since 1991. Bangladeshi women have also proved their excellence in every walk of life. They are not only notable in politics, government administration, business, fashion, entertainment, education, science and sports but have have performed great services in the police, military, airforce and navy of Bangladesh. But they constitute a meagre portion of the female population of Bangladesh. Most of the notable women come from urban areas and belong to the elite that constitutes a very small portion of the total population of Bangladesh. The majority of women in Bangladesh's rural and urban areas are still living in deplorable conditions. Bangladesh has signed a series of conventions, treaties, platform for action and resolutions for the development and empowerment of women, not only at the domestic level but also at the international level to promote its image as a responsible global citizen. Laws made at the domestic level to safeguard women's rights include the following:

- The Muslim Family Ordinance (1961) regulates certain aspects of divorce, polygamy, and inheritance
- Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act (1974) provides that every marriage solemnised under Muslim Law shall be registered and for this purpose the government shall appoint Marriage Registrars.
- The Muslim Marriage and Divorces (Registration) Rules (1975) were framed to determine the qualifications for appointment of a marriage registrar, fees payable to a marriage registrar and any other matter ancillary thereto.

- The Dowry Prohibition Act (1980) pronounces the taking and giving of dowry an offence punishable by fine and imprisonment
- The Cruelty to Women Act or Deterrent Punishment (Ordinance of 1983) provides punishment by death or life imprisonment for the kidnapping or abduction of women for unlawful purposes, trafficking women, or causing death or attempting to cause death or grievous injuries to wives for dowry.
- The Child Marriage Restraint Ordinance (1984) raises the age of marriage from 16 to 18 for women and from 18 to 20 for men.
- The Penal Code (Second Amendment Ordinance) (1984) provides capital punishment for causing grievous injuries or acid throwing.
- The Family Court Ordinance (1985) deals with causes of marriage, divorce, and the maintenance, guardianship, and custody of children
- National Women Organization Act (1991): The Act was made for the establishment of the National Women Organization
- The Anti-Terrorism Ordinance (1992) provides punishment for all types of terrorism including teasing through making mockery of women or abducting children and women.
- The Suppression of Immoral Trafficking Act (1993) provides punishment for forcing a girl into prostitution
- The Women and Children Repression Prevention Act of 1995, (amended in 2000) provides stringent measures including the death penalty, and life imprisonment for the crimes of rape, abduction, dowry, and trafficking related offences. Persons arrested under this act cannot be granted bail during an initial investigation period of up to 90 days.

- Acid Crime Prevention Act (2002) and Acid Control Act (2002) stipulate the death sentence as a maximum penalty for an assault.

The government of Bangladesh has taken several steps to promote the welfare and advancement of women. In 1978, the Women's Affairs Division was created in the Presidential Secretariat and was upgraded to become the Ministry of Women and Children Development in 1982 (ADB 2001). Since 1982, women have been regularly appearing at public service examinations and recruited into the regular cadre of the public service. In order to increase the number of women in the government administration a quota system was introduced for women and is applicable for all types of public appointment. Under this arrangement, 10% of recruitment to gazetted posts and 15% of recruitment to non-gazetted posts are reserved for women. In addition, a special initiative was taken in 2006 to appoint women to senior administrative levels i.e. deputy secretary and joint secretary posts (Mirza 2007, GoB 2004).

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh also guarantees no discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and equal protection and equality for every citizen under law. According to Article 28 of the Constitution of the People's Republic Of Bangladesh:

> (i) Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of state and public life.
> (ii) Nothing of this article shall prevent the state from making special provision in favour of women or children or for the advancement of any background section of citizens

Article 27 and Article 29(1) also provide equal opportunity for men and women in all spheres of state and public life with respect to employment in the services of the Republic. Article 65(3) makes women eligible to contest election for any constituency.

At international level, Bangladesh has ratified CEDAW (1979), Bejing Platform for Action (1995) and the Millennium Development Goals 2000. In spite of all this, the women of Bangladesh are the most vulnerable section of population of the country. This is mainly because of the poor implementation of the policies adopted at domestic and international level (Gender Index of Bangladesh 2010). The prevalence of a weak judicial system with corrupt law enforcement agencies prevents women from seeking justice. In a system where women are considered commodities and men have a 'superiority complex' concerning gender perceptions, the suppression of cases concerning rape, wife battering and acid throwing has been a logical consequence. Such a situation has left women neglected, unable to explore their potential and often struggling to achieve the basic necessities of life. Tables 6.3-6.7 show the socio-economic indicators of inequality as they affect the women of Bangladesh.

Table 6.3: Gender Inequality Patterns in Bangladesh

Gender Inequality Index (GII) (2008)									
Rank	**GII Value (0-1)**	**Maternal Mortality Ratio**	**Adolescent Fertility Rate**	**Seats in Parli-ament (%)**	**Population with At Least Secondary Education (% ages 25 and older)**		**Labour Force Participation Rate (%)**		**Births Attended by Skilled Health Personnel (%)**
116 out of 137	0.734	570 maternal deaths per 100,000 births	71.6 (number of births per 1000 women aged 15-19)	6.3	**Fem-ale**	**Male**	**Fem-ale**	**Male**	18
					30.8	39.3	61.4	85.5	

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2010

Note: Gender inequality index is defined in chapter 5 under table 5.3.

Table 6.3 indicates the poor performance of Bangladesh in relation to the UNDP's measurement of global gender inequality. According to UNDP (2010), Bangladesh ranks low at 116 out of 137 countries demonstrating that the women of Bangladesh fare badly in all measured dimension of the UNDP's Human Development Index. Table 6.3 shows Bangladesh's maternal mortality ratio standing at 570 deaths per 100,000 births in 2008. Safe delivery is usually low in Bangladesh. Less than one-fifth (18%) of births were attended by medically trained personnel in 2008. Although the overall use of medically trained attendants was low, bigger gender disparities were evident in education and asset ownership. BDHS (2007) indicates women with secondary and higher education were 13 times more likely to use medically trained personnel for delivery than women with no education (60% vs. 4.5%). Women from urban area were two times more likely to use medically trained personnel for delivery than women from rural area. Non-poor women were two and a half times more likely to use antenatal care (ANC) services than poor women. Similarly, non-poor women were far more likely to use a medically trained attendant during delivery than poor women (40% vs. 3%). Post-partum haemorrhage (PH), ante-partum hemorrhage (APH), eclampsia obstructed labour or ruptured uterus, infection and abortion are other causes of maternal deaths during or after pregnancies (BDHS 2007). UNDP reporting on gender inequality in Bangladesh is backed up by the World Economic Forum 2010, which ranks Bangladesh 39 out of 58 countries in eliminating the gender gap. Table 6.3 also indicates lower literacy rates and labour force participation rates for women compared to men which are further elaborated in Tables 6.4 and 6.5.

Table 6.4: Female Literacy Rate and Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Bangladesh Aged 15 +

Year	National Literacy Rate		Rural Literacy Rate		Urban Literacy Rat		GPI
	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	(0-1)
2005	48.6	58.3	43.8	53.6	62.3	72	0.54
2006	48.8	58.5	44	53.8	62.5	72.3	0.56
2007	49.2	59.6	44.4	54.3	63	73.1	0.57

Source: Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2008, Bangladesh Economic Review 2010

Note: GPI is defined under table 5.4

The literacy rate in Bangladesh for women during 2005-07 rose from 48.6% to 49.2%. The female literacy rate in urban areas is higher than in rural areas. Although Bangladesh has introduced policies for achieving gender parity in education, implementation of these policies has remained dismal. The decade of the 1990s was significant in the history of educational development in the country, with respect to primary and mass education, particularly for girls and women. In 1990, Bangladesh fully participated in the global Education for All (EFA) (1990) initiative and introduced the Compulsory Primary Education Act. The government committed itself to the goals of the Dakar Framework which aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets by the year 2015 (GoB Ministry of Education Website; WB 2008). Although noteworthy achievements have been made in female enrolment at the primary level, progress has been very slow in secondary level education. At this level male and female enrolment rates have shown some improvements but at the secondary level, the drop-out rate of female students reaches 50%, which is higher by 20% than the drop-out rate of male students. This is because of poverty and various socio-cultural practices as described in previous pages. Another reason for high drop-out at secondary level for women is many peoples' belief that

religion does not permit women's secular education. Their attention should be on the Quran and *Hadith.* The population of Bangladesh's rural areas, like Pakistan, are more conservative than those in urban areas. This is the reason literacy rates in rural areas are less than in urban areas. Very few women in rural areas continue their education up to the tertiary level (Gender Index of Bangladesh 2010). This negatively affects the overall rate of return from education and women's labour market entitlements. Tables 6.5-6.7 show gender statistics regarding the labour force in Bangladesh.

Table 6.5: Crude and Refined Labour Force Participation Rates in Bangladesh by Sex and Locality (2004-2005)[17]

Distribution according to Population		Crude Activity Participation Rates (%)	Refined Activity Participation Rates (%)
Total Population	Male	53.3	69.3
	Female	18.0	20.7
Urban Population	Male	54.2	66.3
	Female	17.9	10.1
Rural Population	Male	53.0	71.0
	Female	18.1	26.4

Source: Bangladesh labour Force Survey 2004-05, Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2008, Bangladesh Economic Review 2010

Note: Labour force participation, crude activity participation and refined activity participation rates are defined in Chapter 5 under Table 5.5.

[17] Bangladesh Statistical Survey (2004-05) is the most updated data available on labour force participation in Bangladesh

Table 6.5 indicates that in Bangladesh only 18% women were part of labour force as compared to 53.3% men in 2004-05. In urban areas the situation was more extreme as only 17.9% of women were part of the labour force as against 54.2% of men. Women were more involved in the labour forces of rural areas for two reasons. First, women in rural Bangladesh are in general responsible for most of the agricultural work because they see it as a part of their normal household chores for which no remuneration is expected (Bangladesh Economic Review 2010). In addition, in contemporary rural society, temporary labour migration of men is common with women becoming *de facto* heads of households who make all agricultural decisions, hire labour, sell crops and control, at least partially, the farm income. About 45% of the women who work in field agriculture are from households with very small land holdings (200 to 1,600 square meters) followed by women with small and medium size farms and landless women. Poor women grow vegetables, manage livestock and work as wage labourers on other farms (Bangladesh Rural Development Board Website). The second reason for women's involvement in rural agriculture has been the rising availability of micro credit facilities in rural Bangladesh initiated by the Grameen Bank and other NGOs. Women have thus involved in small-scale agriculture-based businesses that include poultry farming, dairy farming, fish farming or growing vegetables.

Another study by the International Labour Organisation (Rahman & Otobe 2005) indicates that the marital status of Bangladeshi men and women also has an impact on labour force participation rates. The highest labour force participation rate is for women who have never married, whereas unmarried men have a much lower labour force participation rate than married men. Married men have the highest labour force participation rate while married women have the lowest labour force participation rate. The pattern described above reflects society's expectations of the role of married men and women. In 93% of the cases, married men perform the role of

principal earner, while only 23% of married women are labour force participants. Childbearing and child care is the key factor in keeping the labour force participation rate of married women at low levels. Table 6.6 further elaborates the status of women as a part of labour force.

Table 6.6: Employment Status in Bangladesh by Sex Aged 15+ (2005-2006)

(As Percentage of Total Population)

Type of Employment	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Employees	43.3	20.7	38.4
Self Employed	36.5	18.6	31.7
Unpaid Family Helpers	19.1	60.3	28.8
Employers	1.1	0.4	1.1
Total	100	100	100

Source: Bangladesh labor Force Survey 2004-05, Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2008

The data show that only 0.4% women were employers in 2004-05 while 20.7% women were employees. Much of women's labour is expended as unpaid family helpers. This is mainly because of various socio-cultural practices (as described in previous pages) that disqualify women from entering into an income-generating activity. Low wages of women in Bangladesh is another cause that discourages male members of poor families to allow their women to earn for their households. Women normally earn one third of the wages as compared to men. A large number of women are deprived of minimum wages, both in private and public sectors (Bangladesh Economic Review 2010).

Informal appointment processes as opposed to the legal processes and the temporary nature of jobs offered by the employers of the garment factories to illiterate and rural migrant women have led to exploitation. Some 19% of women as opposed to 9% of men workers are estimated to earn below the poverty level (Bangladesh Economic Review 2010). Among unskilled production helpers who predominantly live in slums, nearly half earn below the poverty line income and about a fifth of them can be described as hardcore poor (Bangladesh Economic Review 2010). Although only a small fraction of the machine operators can be described as moderately poor, they have very little scope for upward mobility, especially in the case of women. The working environment of garment factories further deteriorates the physical and mental health of women workers. The absence of child care and health facilities to which women are formally entitled, extra hours of work without extra wages, long distances from their residences to factories without any provision of transportation facilities, and lack of formally decreed safety measures are some of the exploitative measures adopted by the owners of garment manufacturers (WB 2008a). The data suggest that the export-oriented ready-made garment factories generate employment opportunities for poorer and unskilled rural women but do not automatically uplift them from poverty or hardship (Bangladesh Economic Review 2010).

Frankl (2004, p.42) argues that there are positive and negative effects for women's participation in garment industries.

> Positively, these industries have made women's participation in wage employment possible. This has created a first generation female industrial work-force in a society where it was previously next to impossible for female labourers to enter the public sphere due to various socio-cultural and religious practices. Negatively, women are being exploited as cheap labourers with no right to organize unions to demand better wages and working conditions.

This means that the unpaid family workers is the only category where women outnumber men. Table 6.6 indicates that in 2004-05 countrywide, 60.3% of women were unpaid family workers as compared to 19.1% of men. Table 6.7 provides a clear picture of women's labour force participation in different sectors of economy.

Table 6.7: Employment by Sectors and Gender in Bangladesh in 2004-2005 (As Percentage of Employed Population)

Sector	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture	44.1	69.5	49.1
Manufacturing	10.3	7.9	16.8
Construction	9.5	2.3	4.4
Transport	9.8	1.1	4.9
Services	16.4	8.2	11.9
Others	9.9	11.0	12.9
Total	100	100	100

Source: Bangladesh Labour Force Survey 2005-06, Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2008, Bangladesh Economic Review 2010

Table 6.7 indicates that agriculture, manufacturing and domestic or household service was the biggest sectors for Bangladeshi women's labour force participation in 2004-2005. It is, however, important to note that the total percentage of women involved in the agriculture sector included both paid and non-paid workers. Nearly 1.26 million women were employed in the readymade garments industry (Bangladesh Economic Review 2010[18]). These women were mostly unskilled labourers living in urban slum settlements. The number of garment factories increased from 1500 in 1992 to 4000 in 2004. Women constitute 90% of the 1.4 million garment sector labourers who

[18]Data from garment sector is being presented here as an example to indicate how women were starting absorbing in manufacturing sector of Bangladesh

in the absence of any alternative source of income and out of extreme poverty are forced to work in these factories for extremely low wages (Bangladesh Economic Review 2010).

Table 6.7 shows only 8.2% of women worked in the service industries out of which very few were in specialised fields such as finance, real estate, communication and the hotel industry (Bangladesh Economic Review 2010). This is mainly because of lower participation in tertiary and specialised education by women as compared to men. This draws attention to the earlier observation of high drop-out females at the secondary level of education.

What all these labour force data show is that despite women's important role in agriculture, the traditional social norms and customary laws deprive Bangladeshi women of equitable economic opportunities and access to resources. They have far less opportunity to participate in the modern economy than men. This correlates with the preceding analysis of discrimination and violence against women, and leads us to consideration of women's role in politics. Has that been a similar story?

Historical Perspective on Women's Political Empowerment at National Level

This section describes the history of women's political involvement in Bangladesh since independence. It highlights the constitutional provisions about women's political representation in the *Jatiya Sangsad* (Bangladesh's parliament), special provisions or quotas adopted for women's political representation, the incidence of women's political representation from 1973, and the share of women in national cabinets from 1973.

Women's political involvement in Bangladesh emerges in the backdrop of weak political institutions, the country's extreme poverty and a culture of female subordination. The *Jatiya*

Sangsad of Bangladesh is a male-dominated political institution. Women have had a marginal position in the parliament though they constitute just over half the population as well as voters. Since 1991, two women, Khalida Zia and Hasina Wajid, have been working as the leaders of the house and the leaders of the opposition in parliament alternatively. But their prominent presence could not hide the marginal position in general of women in Bangladesh politics and in the parliament (Ahmed & Bela 2001; Ahmed 2005). Taking a lesson from Pakistan's political experience from 1947-1971 and knowing the importance of women in not only politics but also in every walk of life, framers of the 1972 Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh ensured the continued participation of women in the political arena (Goswami 1998). Clause 3 of Article 65 of the Constitution reads:

> Until the dissolution of Parliament occurring next after the expiration of the period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution there shall be reserved fifteen seats exclusively for women members, who shall be elected according to law by the members aforesaid [elected MPs] (Islam 1995, p. 23)

This clause provided the legal basis for women's representation in parliament through reserved seats ever since the first parliament. Table 6.8 shows the number of women elected to reserved and general seats in all the parliaments of Bangladesh from 1973-2008.

Table 6.8 shows the first parliament of Bangladesh (1973-75) started with 15 women MPs selected to reserved seats (Chowdhury 1998). No woman was elected to the general seats in the first parliament. Women elected to reserved seats were selected by votes of the MPs elected to general seats. All women MPs of the first parliament belonged to the the ruling party *Awami League* (AL) (Chowdhury 1998). In 1978, the period of reservation of women seats was extended by the then parliament to 15 years and the number of seats was increased from 15 to 30. As a result, 30 women MPs were elected in the second parliament (1979-82). In the second

parliament, all of the women selected to reserved seats were from the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The second parliament of Bangladesh also had two women popularly elected to the general seats (Chowdhury 1998). This means that 10.66% of the parliament was comprised of women.

Table 6.8: Women's Representation in the Parliament of Bangladesh 1973-2008

Parliament	No. of Reserved Seats (R)	No. Women MPs from General Seats (G)	Total No. Of Women MPs (R+G)
1st Parliament (1973-75)	15	-	15
2nd Parliament (1979-82)	30	2	32
3rd Parliament (1986-87)	30	5	35
4th Parliament (1988-90)	0	4	4
5th Parliament (1991-95)	30	4	34
6th Parliament (1996-96)	30	3	33
7th Parliament (1996-2001)	30	8	38
8th Parliament (2001-2006)	0	7	7
9th Parliament 2009-todate)	45	19	64

Source: Website Inter parliamentary union, Website Quota Project, Website Bangladesh Parliament, Election Commission of Bangladesh

In the third parliament (1986-87), 30 women were again selected to reserved seats and all belonged to the then ruling *Jatiya Party* (JP). In the third parliament, five women members were

elected to the general seats (Chowdhury 1998). The period of reservation of 30 seats for women in the Parliament expired on 16 December 1987 (Ahmed 2005).

Lacking reserved seats in the fourth parliament (1988-1990), the total number of women MPs dropped to 4 who were elected to the general seats and belonged to the ruling Jatiya Party (JP) (Firoj 2002). Bangladesh witnessed prolonged military rule from 1982-1991. During this autocratic rule, a large number of women from urban areas of Bangladesh agitated for the exercise of their democratic rights. Political parties started to mobilise women in political meetings and processions. Women started to take part in rallies, processions and meetings in favour of their parties. A large number of NGOs also carried out programs to raise awareness among women about their voting and political rights (Islam 1995). Due to these efforts by parties, civil society and international organisations, the military government of Bangladesh again reinstated reserved seats for women in 1990.

In 1990, the 10th Amendment to the Constitution re-inserted clause 3 to Article 65 providing 30 reserved seats for women for a further period of 10 years from the first sitting of the next Parliament (Islam 1995). Following this Amendment, 30 women MPs from the reserved seats were elected in the fifth (1990-95), sixth (1996) and seventh (1996-2001) parliaments. In the fifth parliament, 4 women members were elected to the general seats, 3 of them from AL and 1 from BNP. BNP, the ruling party, secured 28 reserved seats and the remaining 2 of this category were given to *Jamat-i-Islami* (JIB), the then ally of BNP (Ahmed 2005; Halder 2004). The sixth parliament survived only for 11 days from 19 March 1996 to 30 March 1996, which is the shortest period in the parliamentary history of Bangladesh. It also elected 30 MPs for the reserved seats. The total number of women MPs in this parliament was 33 as three other women were elected to

the general seats from BNP. In the seventh parliament, there were 38 women. Eight were elected from the general seats, 3 of them from AL, three from BNP and the remaining two from JP. From the 30 reserved seats, the ruling party AL secured 27 and the remaining three were given to JP for its support in forming the government (Ahmed & Ahmed 2001). This provision of reserved seats for women in the parliament expired in April 2001, at the end of the seventh parliament. This parliament ended without the passage of any constitutional amendment bill for the continuation of reserved seats in the parliament. Therefore, there were no women MPs in the eighth parliament from the reserved category (Ahmed 2005). In the eighth parliament, the Constitution Act 2004 (Fourteenth Amendment) was passed by the parliament by which Article 65(3) was inserted into the Constitution:

> Until the dissolution of Parliament occurring next after the expiration of the period of ten years beginning from the date of the first meeting of the Parliament next after the Parliament in existence at the time of the commencement of the Constitution (Fourteenth Amendment) Act. 2004, there shall be reserved forty five seats exclusively for women members and they will be elected by the aforesaid members in accordance with law on the basis of procedure of proportional representation in the Parliament through single transferable vote: (Bangladesh Parliament Website)

It is important to emphasise that the majority of the women parliamentarians entered the *jatiya sangsad* through reserved seats and as shown above, most of the reserved seats were being filled by the ruling party. Despite the Constitution (for most of the years of its existence) assuring women's representation in the *jatiya sangsad*, the political parties in Bangladesh never considered women important enough to give them significant representation in cabinet. Table 6.9 shows the proportion of women's ministerial representation in Bangladesh's parliament since its independence.

Table 6.9: Women's Representation in the Bangladesh Cabinet 1973-2008

Government	Total No. of Ministers	Total No. of Male Ministers	Total No. of Female Ministers	Percentage of Female Ministers
Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman (1972-1975)	50	48	2	4.0
Zia-ur-Rehmann (1979-1981)	101	98	3	2.97
Hossain M. Ershad (1982-1990)	133	127	6	4.51
Khalida Zia (1991-1996)	39	36	3	7.69
Khalida Zia (1991-1996)	The Parliament lasted for only 11 days and was dissolved for new elections on the charges of massive poll rigging			
Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001)	46	42	4	8.70
Khalida Zia (2001-2006)	59	56	3	5.0
Sheikh Hasina (2009-)	42	37	5	11.90

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union Website; Quota Project Website; Bangladesh Parliament Website; Election Commission of Bangladesh Website; Female Ministers of Bangladesh Website

Table 6.9 shows the meager percentage of women in ministerial positions in Bangladesh's cabinet throughout its parliamentary history. The highest percentage of women's share in cabinet is 11.9% and this was after 2009. The data presented in Table 6.9 indicate that women have not

been considered as equals of men in the political affairs in Bangladesh. Even women prime ministers since 1991 have been disinclined to give women a significant share of ministerial positions. After having reviewed the historical perspective of women's political empowerment at national level in Bangladesh, it is necessary to examine historically women's political empowerment at the local level to give an overall perspective on women's political empowerment in Bangladesh as context for later analysis.

Historical Perspective on Women's Political Empowerment at Local Level

At present, there are two types of local government institutions in Bangladesh: one for the rural areas and the other for urban areas (Ahmed 1997). The local government in rural areas comprises three tiers, i.e. district, *upazila* and *union*. As mentioned earlier in the Chapter, districts from the top tier of sub-national government in Bangladesh. The 64 districts are subdivided into *thanas or upazilas*. There are 493 *thanas or upazila.* A *thana* is further subdivided into administrative units called *union parishad*. There are 4498 *union parishads* (BBS 2009). A *union parishad* consists of nine wards. There are roughly 80,000 villages under wards. Local government in urban areas consists of city corporations and *pourashavas* (city councils) (Ahmed 1997). There are six city corporations and 308 pourashavas. It is important to indicate that in Bangladesh, at local level, reserved seats for women have always been present in *union parishads* (UPs), the lowest level of subnational government.

The number of members in a UP is fixed and does not vary according to the size of the population in the UP. A UP consists of 5-15 villages with an average combined population of 24,500. Each UP consists of one chairperson, nine members in general seats, and three women members in reserved seats, for a total of 13 persons. This makes the guaranteed proportion

percentage of women to 23% in the UP. All seats, including that of the chairman, are directly elected in non-party based elections. The chairman is elected from the entire voting population of a UP. The office is open for both men and women to contest. The nine general members are directly elected from each of the UP's nine wards and are open to both men and women. The women in the reserved seats don't have any special ward of their own but are elected from three of the general wards. In these wards (open for women only) women candidates contest against each other but are elected by votes from both men and women.

Since the independence of Bangladesh, efforts have been made to incorporate women in political decision making at the national level, but no serious effort was made from government from 1971-75 to incorporate women into the local governing bodies (Ali 1986; Alam 1984). In 1976, the government promulgated the Local Government Ordinance which changed the structure of local government into a three-tier local government system of district, *thana* and union in the hierarchy from top to bottom (Alam 1984). Another provision was made to reserve two seats for women members at the *Union Parishad* level. Article 5 of the Local Government Ordinance (1976) stated that:

> The *Union Parishad* will comprise one elected chairman and nine elected members, two nominated women members and two peasant representative members.

The ordinance was the first of its kind in Bangladesh to incorporate women into local councils through quotas or reserved seats as it was very hard for women to get directly elected because of socio-cultural attitudes and practices that hindered women's empowerment (Ahmed 1997). The ordinance had some drawbacks. First, it did not provide details for the nomination process of the women candidates. The ordinance required government representatives to nominate women. This restricted the access of women with no family political background to local councils.

Women from political families or with political connections to the chairman or members of the council usually obtained nomination due to political influence of their family members (Khan & Ara 2006). Second, the ordinance did not explain the demarcation of the working territories of women members unlike other elected members of the council. Also, women's responsibilities were not spelled out in the charter of the *Local Government Ordinance (1976)*. This made women completely dependent on the discretion of the chairman who, in the majority of cases, preferred male members over female members (Ahmed et al. 2003). This made the women's presence in the local councils merely a token representation.

In 1983, changes were made to the structure and composition of the UP in the *Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance*. This ordinance increased the number of nominated women member from two to three with each representing one ward. The 1983 ordinance neither changed the nomination process of the women members nor were their roles clearly specified within the councils. This made the nominated women of the union council dependent again on the wishes and whims of the chairmen for the activities they would be tasked with (Jahan 1997; Khan & Ara 2006). There was no significant change in the attitude of the chairmen between 1976 and1983. Most of the chairmen of the councils still did not consider women important enough for the assignment of important and independent duties to them. For this reason, women were still seen to be token representatives in the local councils (Ahmed et al. 2003).

The *Local Government Amendment Act 1993* set out the minimum representation of women in local government. It scrapped the system of nomination by government representatives but provision was made for indirect election for women at *union parishad* level (Ahmed et al. 2003). The 1993 legislation maintained the number of nominated women at three with each representing one ward, as was provided for in the 1983 Act. With the 1993 Act, women were to be elected by

chairmen and elected members of the council. However, the 1993 Act did not demarcate the territorial jurisdiction of the women member's wards and nothing was specified in this act with regard to the duties and responsibilities of the women members selected to reserved seats unlike directly elected members of the councils as in 1983. This maintained the position of women councillors as token representatives as they had to depend on chairman to assign them any responsibilities (Jahan 1997; UNESCAP 2003).

The *Local Government Second Amendment Act 1997* was a milestone in the history of political empowerment of women in Bangladesh (UNESCAP 2003). The government of Bangladesh enacted this law for direct elections to reserved seats for women at the local level. In this act the government reserved three seats for women in the *union parishad* with one woman member being directly elected from each of the three wards. Apart from the reserved seats, women could also contest for any of the general seats as had always been the case (ADB 2001). The major objective of this act was to create more opportunities for women in local government and to remove the drawbacks of previous acts. The 1997 act introduced several changes in the structure of the *union parishad.* After 1997, the *union parishad* was divided into nine wards for general members and three for the selection of women on reserved seats. This made the constituencies of women three times bigger than those of male members and entrusted great responsibility on women members.

The 1997 act initially contained nothing on the particular responsibilities of women councillors but later on through various circulars women councillors were given specific responsibilities (UNESCAP 2003). Table 6.10 shows the total number of women who contested for general membership as well as for the post of chairperson of the *union parishad* other than reserved seats from 1988-2003.

Table 6.10: Women's Representation in *Union Parishad* for General Members Including Chairpersons (1988-2003)

Year of Election	Total Number of *Union Parishads*	Total No. of Candidates		Total No. of Women Candidates		Total No. of Women Elected	
		Chairperson	Member	Chairperson	Member	Chairperson	Member
1988	4401	18,566	114,699	79	863	1	20
1992-93	4450	17,444	169,683	115	1135	24	32
1997	4479	Not Available	Not Available	102	456	23	110
2003	4283[Note 1]	21,376	137,909	232	617	22	79

Source: Adopted from Khan & Ara 2006 ; UNESCAP 2003; ADB 2001; Ahmed et al. 2003; Pandey 2008;

Note: Election could not be held in rest of the union parishads due to non finalization of electoral boundaries

Table 6.10 indicates a record of extraordinarily low female representation. Thus in the UP elections of 1988, 18,566 candidates contested for the position of chairperson *but there* were only 79 women candidates. Similarly there were only 863 female candidates for the council seats of a total of 169,683 candidates. Only one female chairperson was elected as chairperson in 1988. In 1992-93, women's candidancy and electoral success remained at low levels. Out of 4450 *UPs*, 115 women contested for the post of chairperson and 1,135 for general members' seats. Only 24 members were elected as chairpersons. In the election of 1997, 102 women contested directly for the post of chairperson and 23 of them were elected. In general seats for members 456 women contested against male candidates and 110 were elected women. The UP election of 2003 was the largest local government election in Bangladesh's history (UNESCAP 2003). The elections were held in 4,283 unions out of 4479 unions. In this election, 232 women

candidates contested for the post of chairperson and 617 women contested for the general seats. Twenty-two women were elected as chairperson and 79 won in the general seats. (Ahmed 2003; Khan & Ara 2006). The very low levels of women's presence in these elected offices remained the norm.

The decision to allocate reserved seat for women had been taken to promote women's participation in the decision-making process as a part of women's empowerment and development. After the UP election of 1997, it was widely noticed that the women councillors had faced enormous problems in performing their roles in the local councils (ADB 2004b; UNESCAP 2003). These reports further indicate that women councillors were severely criticised, dishonoured and physically harassed by their male colleagues on petty issues (ADB 2004b; UNESCAP 2003). This aspect is discussed in detail in chapter 8.

Summary

The chapter has shown that women in Bangladesh face discrimination and stereotyping that renders them second class citizens. The patriarchal trends prevalent in socio-economic and political institutions in Bangladesh and their outlook towards women and their religious values remain as powerful forces in the country to negate women's rights and privileges. Women's restrained access to income-generating opportunities, their deprivation from inheritance and drop-out from secondary education ensure their secondary and inferior status. The practice of preference for sons thwarts a girl's potential to flourish. Moreover, certain religious interpretations and their manifestations are seen to have enormous significance in tarnishing women's legal and political rights. Despite ensuring women's legal and political rights in the Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh and their subsequent revision, women's continuous status as secondary citizens indicates that law enforcing agencies and state

functionaries concerned with the safeguarding of social, economic, legal and political rights of women are unable or disinclined to work for the betterment and advancement of women.

7. Discussion and Comparative Analysis: Structural Barriers for Women's Political Empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh

Introduction

In this chapter, we move from the descriptive case studies of Pakistan and Bangladesh to deeper analysis of what insight they provide on the subject of quota for women. To do this, it is necessary to utilise the empirical data from chapters five and six and concepts discussed in chapters two and three and set out in the analytical framework. A comparative perspective is employed and seeks to identify and explain similarities and differences between the case study countries.

In the context of women's poor socio-economic indicators in both countries (see Chapter 5 and 6), it was noted that few women were able to reach national parliaments through direct elections. In the case of Pakistan, the number of women directly elected to national parliaments from 1947-2008 never exceeded 16 out of a total of 300 directly elected members and those 16 seats were only in the 2008 elections. In 2002 the number was 13 and until then, the maximum number of directly elected women at national level never exceeded six. In the case of Bangladesh, the number of women directly-elected to national parliaments from 1973-2009 never exceeded 19

out of a total of 300 directly elected members and those 19 were only in the 2009 elections. Prior to 2009, the maximum number of directly elected women at national level never exceeded eight.

These figures suggest that there are some structural barriers (see Chapter 2) to women's political advancement that restrict women's active political participation as elected representatives in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The following section critically analyses these structural barriers.

The Structural Barriers to Women's Empowerment

The barriers to women's empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh include women's secondary status and socio-cultural discrimination against women in Pakistan and Bangladesh; women's educational deficit; male norms of employment; the nature of women's economic engagement; the feminisation of poverty; voters' and society's biased attitudes and restrictions on women to exercise their voting right; expensive election campaigns; types of electoral system; and the practice of issuing *fatwas* (edicts). These structural barriers are critically evaluated for Pakistan and Bangladesh in this chapter.

Socio-Cultural Discrimination against Women in Pakistan and Bangladesh

The first barrier is women's secondary status and the associated socio-cultural discrimination against females in Pakistan and Bangladesh. It has been observed from the detailed data presented in Chapters five and six that politics in Pakistan and Bangladesh is generally regarded as an area of human activity belonging to men. Women, in these countries, traditionally and culturally are considered as the property of men (Askari 2003). Although legally and constitutionally, women are recognised as equal citizens with men and having their own rights, in practice they are hardly recognised in terms of their own identities. Rather they are categorised

as mother, daughter, sister or wife of a male member of their family (Mukhopadhyay 2005). This attitude was summed up by Tasnima Hossain, former Bangladesh MP and wife of Amwar Hossain Manju, former MP and a former minister in Bangladesh from 2001 until 2004:

> I was not treated as a colleague by other parliament members in the parliament. Rather, I was mostly treated as *bhavi* [wife of brother or friend] or wife of Anwar Hossain Manju, although I was an elected MP. While I was entering into the parliament session, I had to hear that why I was alone? Why I had not come with my husband? The situation was like I would have to come with my husband in the parliament every time (Pandey 2008, p.3).

The disparity between males and females starts from the day a girl is born in both Pakistan and Bangladesh. Preference is given to male children in every aspect of life, ranging from food to education to other necessities of life while female children are given secondary importance, no matter if they are older in age than males (Yazdani 2003a; Halder 2004). The prime reason for this treatment of females is the belief that after marriage females will leave the household and it is only males who will contribute towards the family's income and carry on the name of the family from one generation to another generation (Human Rights Watch 2006). This treatment of girls from the day of their birth makes them feel inferior to men. Women are supposed to remain within the domestic sphere. The extent of the socio-cultural discrimination against women in Pakistan and Bangladesh can be seen from the fact that they are even denied their right of spouse selection and to avail of proper health facilities at times of emergency. Such women cannot include the right of political participation in their priorities. Table 7.1 illustrates these facts with findings from studies conducted in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Table 7.1: Opinion Sought for Spouse Selection from the Respondent Women and Provision of Health Facilities to Respondent Women in Pakistan and Bangladesh

Opinion Sought for Spouse Selection						
Pakistan (2008)						
Province/Division	**Urban**			**Rural**		
	No. Of Yes	**No. Of No**	**Percentage of Yes**	**No. Of Yes**	**No. Of No**	**Percentage of Yes**
Punjab	72	46	61	20	66	23
Sindh	68	60	53	8	60	11
Bangladesh (2006)						
Rajshahi	18	16	53	2	20	9
Khulana	32	22	59	4	28	13
Health Facilities Available to Respondent Women						
Pakistan (2007)						
Province/Division	**Urban**			**Rural**		
	No. Of Yes	**No. Of No**	**Percentage of Yes**	**No. Of Yes**	**No. Of No**	**Percentage of Yes**
Punjab	47	26	64	13	24	35
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	40	31	56	8	28	22
Bangladesh (2006)						
Rajshahi	39	23	62	27	97	24
Barisal	38	27	58	30	69	30

Source: GRAP 2009; ADB 2008; NCSW 2008; ICDDR, B 2007

Table 7.1 shows that in both countries, even basic human rights were denied to women. While in most cases, men selected their life partners by their consent, women were often not consulted. In the urban areas of Pakistan and Bangladesh, where literacy rates are higher than in rural areas, more than 50% women replied that they were consulted but in rural areas of both countries, less

than 25% women replied in affirmative. It is important to note that more than 70% of the population of both countries live in rural areas. These data show that in the majority of cases, women are not consulted in the selection of their life partners.

Similarly, when women in Pakistan and Bangladesh (lower half of Table 7.1) were asked if they were provided with proper hospital treatments in case of emergency, it was found that in rural areas of both countries, women were not provided with adequate health care in cases of emergency. Rural areas of Pakistan and Bangladesh rely more on traditional treatment from *hakeems* (ayurvedric) and self-proclaimed doctors. It was described previously (see chapters five and six) that in Bangladesh, only 18% births were attended by skilled health personnel which is why 570 mothers died for every 100,000 births in Bangladesh in 2006 (BBS 2009). In Pakistan, only 18% of births were attended by skilled health personnel which is why 320 mothers died for every 100,000 births in Pakistan in 2009 (UNDP 2010). This empirical evidence is presented to demonstrate the point that in both countries restrictions are imposed on women that prevent the attainment of their basic human rights which makes it hard for females to enter competitive politics.

Women's Educational Deficit

Women's educational deficit in Pakistan and Bangladesh is the second barrier. Empirical studies conducted in Pakistan and Bangladesh indicate that the majority of the women in both countries have no freedom to make choices about continuing with their formal education. Table 7.2 shows the empirical findings.

Table 7.2: Freedom to Make Choices about Education Available to the Respondent Women of Pakistan and Bangladesh

Pakistan (2008)						
Province/Division	**Urban**			**Rural**		
	No. Of Yes	**No. Of No**	**Percentage of Yes**	**No. Of Yes**	**No. Of No**	**Percentage of Yes**
Punjab	83	35	70	15	71	17
Sindh	68	60	53	10	58	15
Bangladesh (2006-07)						
Rajshahi	20	14	59	3	19	18
Khulana	31	23	58	5	27	16

Source: Adapted from GRAP (2009), and ADB (2008)

Of studies conducted in Pakistan and Bangladesh in which women were asked if they had freedom of choice to avail of or continue education in their respective countries, less than 20% of the women respondents in the rural areas in both countries said they had no choice. Even in urban areas, between 30% and 57% of female respondents indicated no choice about their education. This implies that another basic human right of the women of these two countries is being ignored in many cases. Education is perhaps the strongest factor that enables women to control their own future. Education helps women to be knowledgeable, skilled and self-confident to participate effectively in the developmental processes of the country. High illiteracy rates is probably the single most important factor contributing towards the social, economic and political regression of developing countries (UNDP 2010). UN (2007; UN Website for End Povery Millennium Campaign 2015) has demonstrated that in countries where female illiteracy is high and living standards are low, the prospects of women's active political participation are also low. The argument is only partly valid as there are countries like USA and Japan, where female

literacy is very high along with high living standards but the percentage of women's political representation in these countries is very low (17% and 13% respectively). However, the argument seems valid in the cases of Pakistan and Bangladesh where political participation of women has been extremely low throughout the political histories of these countries. This can be related to poor literacy rates for women in both countries (see Chapters 5 and 6) as well as very low standards of living. The Human Development Index (HDI) indicates, 60.3% of Pakistan's population and 81.3% of Bangladesh's population live on under US$2 a day (UNDP 2010).

Male Norms of Employment

Male norms of employment, is the third barrier against women's political empowerment. Women in Pakistan and Bangladesh are mostly associated with household chores including cooking, washing, cleaning, feeding animals and rearing children. Women are socially and economically subordinated to men. Men, in Pakistan and Bangladesh, culturally and traditionally are still reluctant to let women play an active role in society beyond their home walls. This can be examined by applying Nagy's (2008) concept of 'male norms of employment' first used for Sweden, Norway and Hungary to examine Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The expression 'male norms of employment' is commonly used in feminist literature to refer to a model of work which demands a high level of commitment to a paid job. The model depicts income generation for the running of a house or family as a lifelong commitment. Only men are considered to have the inherent capability of being engaged in income-generating activities to pay for the expenses of their families. Women, on the other hand, are considered incapable of devoting lifelong commitment to financially support their families due to their reproductive roles and child care responsibilities. Thus, the application of this model in Pakistan and Bangladesh

means that male members of society seldom take women seriously for active lifelong economic and political careers. Culturally, in Pakistan and Bangladesh, it is believed to be the man's prerogative to earn for the family and it is interpreted as a woman's destiny to reproduce children, cook and clean for the household. Due to the widespread adoption of such male norms of employment in both countries, men occupy most of the powerful positions in the professional work domain. The prevalence of this male norm reduces the career prospects of women and severely limits their opportunities for accessing positions in business and politics. Society awards men high esteem due to their earning abilities and degrades women due to their non-productivity in income-generating activities.

Nature of Women's Economic Engagement

The nature of women's economic engagement is the fourth barrier to their empowerment. Basically they are much less engaged in income generating activities than men. Table 7.3 shows some empirical findings:

Table 7.3: Respondent Population of Women Engaged in Income-generating Activities

Pakistan (2007)						
Province/Division	**Urban**			**Rural**		
	No. Of Yes	**No. Of No**	**Percentage of Yes**	**No. Of Yes**	**No. Of No**	**Percentage of Yes**
Punjab	26	47	35	6	31	17
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	22	49	31	5	31	15
Bangladesh (2006)						
Rajshahi	26	38	41	28	96	22
Barisal	25	37	40	23	76	23

Source: Data extracted from NCSW (2008), ICDDR, B (2007)

It can be seen that in urban areas of Pakistan and Bangladesh, 41% was the maximum percentage of the respondent women involved in income-generating activities. In urban areas of Bangladesh, a larger percentage (41% and 40%) of women were engaged in income-generating activities than women from urban areas of Pakistan. This was because of the garment industry in Bangladesh which employs large number of women. Likewise, in rural areas of Bangladesh, there were more women engaged in income-generating activities than women from the rural areas of Pakistan. This was due to the wide availability of micro-credit facilities in Bangladesh. But overall, it is clear from Table 7.3 that a small proportion of women were engaged in income-generating activities in both Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The nature of economic engagement of the population a country is critical in explaining the gender inequality patterns in a country (Inglehart & Norris 2003). In other words, countries with equal opportunities for income generation between men and women are more likely to support gender equality than countries with gaps between males and females in income generation. Improvement of women's economic conditions will allow them to think beyond their subsistence and enable them to nominate as candidates for political parties at national and local levels. A general concern of political parties about women is that they are less well equipped than men because they have fewer resources for campaigning (Hughes 2007). Such views affect party behaviour to the detriment of women. In a desire to protect incumbents, and because women have low socio-economic status, political leaders and political parties restrict the involvement of women in politics (Tripp & Kang 2008). Thus, economic development for women has been identified as a significant determinant of women's representation in many countries' legislatures (Ummar et al. 2008). It has been a strong influence in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Feminisation of Poverty

Another factor contributing to the low economic engagement of women in politics in Pakistan and Bangladesh is the feminisation of poverty (see Chapters 5 & chapter 6). Restrictions on the physical movement of women in the conservative societies of Pakistan and Bangladesh are responsible for their economic and social dependence on men which in turns contributes to their political backwardness. Data presented in Chapters five and six indicate that employed women in both countries are mostly concentrated in the informal economy and subsistence sector, where many are engaged in work that is low wage or unpaid and low skilled or unskilled. Much of their work remains invisible, unrecognised and devalued and is unprotected by laws and legislation. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, professions, that are often associated with women carry poor potential for advancement and are mostly associated with horizontal occupational segregation (Baden 2000). They include childcare, elderly care, factory work, agricultural work, and household chores such as cleaning, cooking and washing. The term 'feminisation of poverty' is often used to illustrate the fact that 70% of the 1.5 billion people living on US$1 a day or less are women and the gap between women and men trapped in the cycle of poverty has not lessened (UNDP 2007). In Pakistan and Bangladesh, the expenses for political participation such as for election campaigns, attending meetings and visiting government officials, are financial burdens that the vast majority of women cannot afford. This resulted in their exclusion from participating as candidates in elections.

Voters' Bias and Restrictions on Women to Exercise Their Right to Vote

Voters' bias and society's reluctance to accept politically active women comprise the sixth barrier to women's entrance into politics in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Voters are reluctant to

select female leaders as they are not considered competent enough to solve their problems. Even women are often unwilling to vote against the wishes of their male family members thus making it extremely difficult to be candidates and be elected. At the extreme, there have been examples of initiatives aimed to prevent women from casting their votes. Studies from the 2002 and 2004 by- elections in Pakistan show that conservative factions of society represented through *jirgas* or *panchayats* (traditional non-governmental assemblies) together with political parties tried to stop women from contesting elections or from casting their votes (AF 2005; Bari 2001; Yazdani 2003b). Historical institutionalism helps researchers to find out what was the most followed behaviour through analysis of historic record. Thus, the practice of barring women from casting vote dates back to the 1950s in Pakistan and is still prevalent. For example, during the local government elections from 1950-60, two candidates, Sher Ali Khan and Atta Ullah Khan had an agreement in Pai Khel in Mianwali (Pakistan) that no women would be allowerd to cast a ballot (AF 2008; Wilder 1999). This agreement is practiced until now. The *tehsil* has a population of 30,000 with 6000 women voters who have never been allowed to use their basic right to vote. Written agreements were made across party lines in conservative districts of Swabi, Mardan and Dir (Pakistan) in 2001, whereby party activists worked to stop women from putting themselves up for office. During the local government elections, thousands of women in 13 out of 56 union councils of Swabi were barred from casting votes after contesting candidates signed an agreement between themselves (AF 2001a; NCSW 2010). Local *jirga* members, religious parties and even members of major political parties were involved in the agreement.

Furthermore, women from Dir, Kohistan, Batagram, Landi Kotal, Jamrud and Mardan in Pakistan were not allowed to file nomination papers for 2002 national and local government elections (AF 2001a; NCSW 2010). Religious authorities of the conservative districts issued

fatwas (edicts) or imposed threats, for example, fines from Rs50,000 to Rs500,000, the annulment of marriage certificates or the refusal of proper burial ceremonies on those women who were found to be casting their votes or contesting the elections and sanctions on the families of women who allowed them to cast their votes (AF 2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2005). Likewise in recent years in Kalkipur, a *union parishad* in Bangladesh women were still prevented from going to polling centres because of local *fatwas* declaring that it was anti-religious for women to vote (Ahmed 2005).

Examples like these show the extreme extent to which traditional patriarchal powers have challenged women's political participation. Using the perspective of historical institutionalism indicates that by knowing the historical events, expectations can be presented in a better way by learning lessons from history. Events happen within historical context have a direct consequence on decisions for the making of future policies (see chapter 3, Thelen 1999). But in the case of Pakistan and Bangladesh, no formal effort has been made by governments and the election commissions of each country to stop these discriminatory activities. ADF (2008) accordingly observes that as new contenders for power and resources, women face serious limitations in which deeply ingrained ideologies, pre-existing patterns of authority and long-standing interests seek to maintain the status quo and keep political power in the hands of male elders.

Expensive Election Campaign

Expensive election campaigns and the nature of political systems is the seventh structural barrier to women's empowerment. This combination hinders free and fair elections as well as women's participation in national politics in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Various empirical studies in Pakistan and Bangladesh have indicated that considerable sums of money are required to contest

elections with any chance of succss. The minimum amounts required for contesting a national level constituency vary from Rs/Tk 5 million to 10 million (PKR 80.126=1US$ in 2006 and PKR 90.223=US$1 in 2012, BDT83.78=1US$ in 2012) (Ahmed et al. 2003; Ahmed & Ahmed 2002, ADB 2004b, UNDP 2006; Forex Website). Furthermore, involvement of money earned through corruption and illegal sources is aggravating the rising costs of election campaigns in both countries (Chowdhury 2002; Mirza & Wagha 2009). Election funding pays for the malpractice of buying votes as well as other campaign costs. Women do not normally have access to such large financial resources. At the national level, male candidates are often sponsored by private companies and rich corporate bodies with a view to collect a return of their investment with return on investment once their sponsored candidates are elected (Ali 2004)). This corporate funding creates patron–client relationships in the public decision-making process. For example, a legislator whose election campaign has been sponsored by a private company may lobby for the privatisation of a government enterprise which that private company wants to takeover (Ali 2004). Since politics is still seen as a 'male world', it is not surprising that most private companies and individuals give their support to men as they are generally believed to have greater chances of winning and extending influence. This is a common phenomenon in both Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Expensive election campaigns are not only prevalent at national level in Pakistan and Bangladesh but are also becoming evident at local levels. Various empirical studies in Pakistan and Bangladesh have indicated Rs/Tk 50,000-100,000 are minimally required for funding an election campaign at the local level. In the case of Pakistan, Pattan Development Organisation (PDO 2006a) cited Rakshanda Gulzar, a directly elected local councilor from a union council in Punjab. She revealed that it cost Rs50,000 for her election campaign, and to raise this amount her

husband had to sell three buffaloes. Frankl (2004) interviewed a women councilor in Bangladesh about the rising cost of election campaigns. She reported being offered Tk100,000 from her opponent to withdraw from the election. She refused and spent Tk5000 on her election campaign. She was defeated by her rival who spent Tk 250,000 on her campaign. She complained that it was only because of her limited financial resources that she was unable to gain re-election as a member of the *union parishad*.

Electoral System

An electoral system can be both an enabling and a disabling mechanism for women to increase their representation in formal politics (see Chapter 2, Farrell 2001; Dahlerup & Friednavaal 2004; Dahlerup 2006). A growing literature on women's political participation indicates that proportional representation (PR) systems select higher percentages of women for political office than other electoral systems (Dahlerup & Friednavall 2005; Matland 2005). Both in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the majority-plurality (MP) system is used for the elections at national level. Under the MP system, votes are cast and counted for an individual candidate. A winning candidate is required to earn the highest number of votes among all candidates contesting the same constituency. Under PR, electors vote for party lists of candidates rather than for individuals (Rule 1990). Instead of relying on contestants' personal appeal or personal characteristics, the relative strength and popularity of political parties have the major influence on voting behaviour. Political parties are the real competitors rather than individuals. Parties obtain seats in the parliament in proportion to their overall share of votes (Dahlerup & Friednavall 2005; Matland 2005).

Under MP system, votes for small parties or individuals are irrelevant when they fail to win the election. Thus, under the MP system, the pattern of voting does not give adequate and fair representation to the candidates of minority or disadvantaged groups (Matland 2005; Krook 2006, 2006, 2009; Dahlerup 2002, 2005, 2006; Tremblay 2008). While the PR system can give representation to such groups, it is the party, not the electorate that determines the nomination and placement of a candidate on the party list for parliament (IPU 1997; Dahlerup & Friednavall 2005; Matland 2005). PR does not facilitate a geographical linkage between the electorate of a particular constituency and a particular MP. There is also some criticism attached to PR system where political parties may manipulate party list by placing male party members on the top of the list. That is why, there have been suggestions that quota systems are best practiced in those countries such as in Scandinavia, where the PR system uses the zipper or zigzag system for listing candidates as every other candidate in the parties' electorate lists is from the opposite sex (Dahlerup 2003, 2006; Krook 2006; Squires 2007)

In spite of some criticism, empirical findings across the world suggest that for women's enhanced representation in parliaments, PR offers greater access than MP does (Reyes 2002; Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009). A study of IPU (1997) from the mid-1990s revealed that women held 11% of seats in parliaments of those democracies using MP while the figure was nearly double at 20% for those democracies using PR. As Pakistan and Bangladesh are both MP systems, the electoral arrangements can be seen as another structural barrier that works against women's entry into politics. Adoption of PR may result in an increased numbers of women as candidates and winners in both countries. However, as both Pakistan and Bangladesh have used MP since independence, a sudden shift to PR is unlikely. Nevertheless, there have been such shifts elsewhere. For example, MP was practiced in New Zealand for more than a century, but a

shift from MP to PR occurred in 1996 and proved effective for enhancing women's political representation in parliament as in 2010 33.6% of parliamentary members are women and that is without any quotas (IPU website; IDEA Website). Adoption of PR can save women from expensive individual election campaigns. However, any shift from MP to PR would rely heavily on gaining the support of political parties in both countries but this is unlikely as leading parties, show little inclination for nominating women as their candidates.

Patriarchal Trends in Political Parties

Patriarchal trends of political parties is the ninth structural barrier against women's political empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Although, this aspect is mentioned in detail in chapter 8, it is important to give examples here from Pakistan and Bangladesh of how political parties are behaving as gate keepers to restrict women's entrance into elected assemblies (Dahlerup 2006).

Women's entry to elected assemblies through gender quotas created a genuine interest in politics among women while their presence in these political bodies served as a role model for other women. This impact was obvious from the increased number of women candidates (180) who contested elections for general seats in the general election of 2007 in Pakistan (NCSW 2010). This was a clear indication that the political aspirations of women were changing fast. However, only 38 of these women succeeded in getting party tickets. All of these 38 women belonged to political elite families. The remaining independent women candidates lost. It appears that without party support, it is difficult for independent women candidates to win general seats without party support, especially when the election process has become increasingly commercialised and criminalised (Ali 2004; Bari 2003). Fifteen women candidates have been

elected to general seats in the national assembly in Pakistan (2007). All of them won on party tickets (GRAP 2009). Likewise in Bangladesh, in the election for the 8th parliament (2001-06, as shown in Table 6.8), in the absence of gender quotas, only seven women were elected through general seats, although 49 women were able to get party tickets. No woman was able to win general seat without a party ticket. Table 7.4 presents data for Bangladesh, in this respect.

Table 7.4: Nomination of Women on Party Tickets in the 2001 Elections in Bangladesh

Name of Political party	Number of Seats Contested by Each Political Party	Number of Women Candidates Contested	Percentage of Women Candidates in Relation to seats contested
Bangladesh Awami Party (AL)	300	14	4.67
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	252	9	3.57
Jatiya Party (JP)	140	6	4.23
Bangladesh Progressive Party (BPP)	20	1	05
Bangladesh Communist Party (BCP)	64	1	12.56
Islamic Jatiya Oikya Front	281	4	1.42
Samridha Bangladesh Andolon	5	1	20
Gono Forum	17	3	17.64
Bangladesh Samajtantarik Dal	64	1	1.56
Independent Candidates	486	9	1.82

Source: Election Commission of Bangladesh (2009)

Table 7.4 indicates that among 486 independent candidates who contested the 2001 elections, there were only nine women. None of them was able to win without party support. Among the major political parties, (top three rows) the percentage of women candidates did not exceed 5%. This shows a continuing gap between women's political aspirations and the willingness of political parties, which can act as gate keepers to provide equal opportunities to women to participate and represent them in politics (Dahlerup 2003, 2006; Chowdhury 2002). Such a

tendency of political parties largely restricted women's political participation in national assemblies to quotas in both countries.

Religious Practices

The use of *fatwas* and other religious practices in Pakistan and Bangladesh is the tenth barrier limiting women's role in politics. Various studies suggest that countries where Islam is practiced conservatively, it can reduce the likelihood of women entering political office (Tripp & Kang 2008). This scenario is depicted in table 7.5.

It indicates that the countries that are at the lowest in terms of women's political representation in national parliaments, eight are Muslim countries. The reasons for this situation among Islamic countries may be related to the argument that there is a gender equality and sexual liberalisation fault line between Muslim and non-Muslim societies (Ertan 2011). Sweeny (2004) goes further to argue that not only Muslim countries but also other countries where religion significantly influences the policy-making process are less likely to protect women's rights as well as most likely to produce oppressive practices against women. Moreover, the countries where authoritarianism and religion complement each other are most likely to violate women's rights (Sweeney 2004). This can be seen in the context of political history of Pakistan ans Bangladesh Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Table 7.5: Bottom 15 Countries in Terms of Women in Parliament in 2008

Rank	Country	Lower or Single House			
		Elections	Seats	Women	Percentage of Women
124	Sri Lanka	4 2004	225	13	5.8%
125	Chad	4 2002	155	8	5.2%
126	Georgia	5 2008	138	7	5.1%
127	Kiribati	8 2007	46	2	4.3%
128	Haiti	2 2006	98	4	4.1%
129	Mongolia	6 2008	76	3	3.9%
130	Vanuatu	9 2008	52	2	3.8%
131	Lebanon	6 2009	128	4	3.1%
"	Tonga	4 2008	32	1	3.1%
132	Marshall Islands	11 2007	33	1	3.0%
133	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	3 2008	290	8	2.8%
134	Bahrain	11 2006	40	1	2.5%
135	Egypt	11 2005	442	8	1.8%
136	Papua New Guinea	6 2007	109	1	0.9%
137	Yemen	4 2003	301	1	0.3%
138	Belize	2 2008	32	0	0.0%
"	Comoros	12 2009	33	0	0.0%
"	Nauru	4 2008	18	0	0.0%
"	Oman	10 2007	84	0	0.0%
"	Palau	11 2008	16	0	0.0%
"	Qatar	7 2008	35	0	0.0%
"	Saudi Arabia	2 2009	150	0	0.0%
"	Solomon Islands	4 2006	50	0	0.0%
"	Tuvalu	8 2006	15	0	0.0%

Source: Website of IPU and Quota Project of International IDEA and Stockholm University
Note: Muslim countries are highlighted in green.

The combination of authoritarian and religious attitudes in some Islamic states is identified as a structural barrier towards women's political empowerment by some critics (Tripp & Kang 2008; Paxton 1997; Reynolds 1999). Both Pakistan and Bangladesh are Islamic states with authoritarian political backgrounds (see Chapters 4 and 5). However, if there is negative

influence of Islam on women's political rights, it is due to particular interpretations of Islamic texts and philosophy. An alternative view supported is that Islam defends the equality of rights of women. Islam is a religion that gives respect to women in all forms. It enhances the status of a mother by declaring paradise under her feet. This can be translated as those who want to enter paradise serve their mothers with pride. Islam orders respect and fulfillment of all obligations towards sisters. It declares daughters as God's blessings and a wife as one of the most precious gifts from God. Two chapters in the Quran *AlNisa* (Women) and *Alnoor* (Light) deal with the rights of women and men towards each other. The problem for women lies with the misinterpretation of some Islamic tenets by less educated religious clerics. These tenets are related to *purdah* (veil) and women's half share in property as compared to men.

For *purdah,* Islam should not mean the seclusion of women. What is desired is the protection of the chastity of women. Islam does not have specific restrictions on women entering into income-generating activities (Naik 2008). In Islamic history there were no restrictions on women's full participation in the economic, political and social spheres of their society. For example, Khadija, the Prophet's first wife was one of the most important merchants of the time, and the Prophet himself was her employee. In early Islamic history, women not only participated in various aspects of their society's public sphere, they also had the right to be elected to political offices (Naik 2008). For example, Omar the second caliph, appointed a woman to oversee the affairs of the market place. The women also participated in wars and fought in the battles (Naik 2008). But religious pundits in both Pakistan and Bangladesh shape customs and behaviours by issuing *fatwas* (edicts). The *purdah* (veil) for women has been the most noticeable among these *fatwas*. These conservative interpreters of Islam declare *purdah* (for which they mean seclusion) as the most important religious practice for women. By practicing *purdah* women bring good

reputation and honour to their families. A majority of rural women are convinced that *purdah* is vital for the well-being of their families. Overall, the people adhere to the belief that those who practice it are believers and pious and while those who ignore it are unbelievers. Interpreting *purdah* as seclusion severally limits the opportunities for women to participate in politics.

There has been some easing of *purdah* due to economic forces. In Bangladesh, economic necessity has forced poor women to migrate to urban areas and take up employment in garment factories (Rahman 2010: Absar 2000). Despite exploitation on the factory floor and new forms of patriarchy, female workers have improved their standings within the family and have begun contesting traditionally male-dominated public spaces. This has occurred in the process of adjustment to urban life. Similarly in the rural areas of Bangladesh, the widespread use of micro-credit facilities by women has enhanced their positions in the family and can lead to less female acquiescence to purdah and more pditive views about the importance of female education (Sultana et al. 2009; Hossain and Kabir 2001). The effects of economic globalization and change have been less felt by women in Pakistan but in urban centres the numbers of women in formal employment has been increasing as has the number of occupatuions in which they are involved (Haque 2010; Butt and Faizunnisa nd). While both visible and invisible forms of *purdah* are still very strong, especially in rural Pakistan, in the urban areas women are incrementally creating more spece in the public arena (Haque 2010, p. 303).

Another challenge to purdah has come from interpretations of the Qur'an that challenge the patriarchical nature of conservative male versions of the Qur'an on the place of women in society. Thus, Wadud (2006, p. 255) talks of 'female dehumanization' and of patriarchal control robbing females of 'their God-given agency and full humanity'. Wome have been voiceless during critical periods in the interpretation of the Qur'an (Waddud-Mahsin 1993). By contrast,

she interprets the Qur'an as providing a message of sexual equality. It is a sacred text that does not set out a gendered set of roles to be applied to all cultures in all times. As Barlas (2004, p. 117) writes, there there is an increasing realisation by Muslims 'that the privileges accruing to men in Muslim societies are a function not of the Qur'an's support for sexual inequality, but of the popwer that men enjoy in actually existing patriarchies which Islam has had no hand in creating and which, in fact, it censures in different ways'.

The practice of *purdah* infiltrates all areas of the society, from celebrations and gatherings to seating arrangements in public transport. Purdah is not only concerned with covering the body or head but also with going out of the house always accompanied by a male or female member of the house. To avoid character assassination that can damage their political careers and to get the label of being pious and a believer, women leaders in Pakistan and Bangladesh practice *purdah* in public, at least symbolically. At local levels, *purdah* can also have a profound effect.

A study of women councillors in Pakistan found that 47% of the respondent women councillors were not allowed to attend official public meetings without male members of their families and their male family members continued to sit with them until the end of the public meetings (NCSW 2007, 2008). Likewise, in Bangladesh, a study of the socio-economic conditions of women revealed that 53% of women from the sample population required permission from their family members to go out of their houses and a massive 89% respondent women revealed that they required permission to go out of their village and in most of the cases they were not allowed to go alone (Hussain 2007). In 2006, Zile-Huma, provincial minister for social welfare in Punjab (Pakistan) was assassinated during a public meeting by a religious extremist on the grounds that she was violating the practice of *purdah* by addressing public meetings. This religious custom is

incorporated into the cultures of Pakistan and Bangladesh and legitimises the exclusion of women from public spaces, the spaces where political activity occurs.

In Pakistan and Bangladesh, *purdah* is strictly observed in most of the poor families or among those families that are poor. Some critics suggest the involvement of 1.4 million women as garment workers in Bangladesh is a symbol of development and a renouncement of the custom of *purdah* (Kabeer 2000). Kabeer (2000) noted that when women working in the garment factories of Bangladesh were interviewed about violating the practice of *Purdah*, they offered an alternative definition of *purdah*. *Purdah* according to them was the *purdah* within oneself, the *purdah* of mind. This re-working of *purdah* to legitimate their behaviour was precipitated by poverty and economic necessity, a situation appropriately described as 'the pain of hunger pushed away their veil' (Jiggins 1994 quoted in Halder 2004, p.37)

Similarly, there are clear explanations in Islam for the half share of women in property but a dominant interpretation by religious pundits in Pakistan and Bangladesh is that the status of women is inferior to men in the eyes of Islam. Sura 4 verse 7 of the Quran states,

> Men shall have a portion of what the parents and the near relatives leave, and women shall have a portion of what the parents and the near relatives leave, whether there is little or much of it; a stated portion.

In Sura 4 verse 11 the Qur'an states:

> Allah enjoins you concerning your children: the male shall have the equal of the portion of two females; then if they are more than two females, they shall have two-thirds of what the deceased has left, and if there is one, she shall have the half.

This verse has been the centre of controversy. Many individuals believe that this does not benefit women economically. Others argue that the decision is fair because a man is legally obligated to maintain his wife, children, parents and other relatives who are in need of assistance whereas a

woman is exempt from these legal obligations. Her share only belongs to her, as she does not have to contribute to the family's maintenance if she does not want to do so (Naik 2008). Another verse in Sura 2 Verse 228 states:

> And women shall have rights similar to rights against them, according to what is equitable. But men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

This verse has been interpreted in different ways. Some see men have advantage over women in intelligence, other view it as men's superiority. However, many Muslim scholars argue that the 'degree of advantage' as is mentioned in above verse is related to *qiwama*, that is, maintenance of the family. A man is legally obligated for this responsibility. Therefore, this 'degree above them' has an economic base and has nothing to do with intelligence or superiority of men over women (Naik 2008).

Interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence *(fiqah)* have been and still are almost exclusively in the hands of male religious scholars. The effect is that the majority of the Islamic sources are interpreted in a patriarchal way (GTZ 2009). In spite of clear instructions for giving due share to women, people in both Pakistan and Bangladesh are still reluctant to give women their shares. In some cases, people in rural areas in both countries get *fatwas* from religious clerics that if women are provided with food, shelter and clothes by men in their family, they have no right to get a share of inheritance. Such *fatwas* and misinterpretation of Islamic doctrines by so-called religious scholars are the biggest structural barriers for women's political empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh. An example has been quoted in Chapter five that in 1965, *Jamat-i-Islami* (religious party) favoured Fatima Jinnah for presidential elections in line with its then political interests but same *Jamat-i-Islami*, declared the election of Benazir Bhutto as prime

minister of Pakistan as un-Islamic in 1988 because its political interests were with opposition parties of that time.

Summary

Using a framework of historical institutionalism and drawing on the concept of structural barriers and illustrative data provided in earlier chapters, it has been demonstrated that there are ten structural barriers that help explain why women have been unable to generate political support among the population and to successfully contest direct elections in both Pakistan and Bangladesh. The similarities in the structural barriers between the two countries were found to be striking. While ten barriers were identified for research countries, it has been shown that they are inter-related and mutually reinforcing. They all contribute to the disempowerment of women and together present formidable obstacles to women entering competitive electoral politics. It is only by overcoming these obstacles that women's empowerment can be achieved and women can increasingly run for offices in direct elections. Until then, they must rely on quotas.

8. Discussion and Comparative Analysis: Roles Played by Various Actors in the Adoption and Implementation of Quota Policies

Chapter two described in detail the critical roles played by three main actors for the wide adoption of gender quotas in developing countries. These actors included civil society (especially women's organisations), international organisations and political elites. This was supplemented in Chapter three by Howlett and Ramesh's (1995) classification of actors involved in the adoption and implementation of policies. In this Chapter, the two instruments have been combined to enable analysis of data pertaining to the adoption of gender quotas in Pakistan and Bangladesh. By applying this actor classification, it is possible to understand and explain the processes involved in the introduction and operation of gender quotas in politics in Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, the order of actors presented by Howlett and Ramesh (1995) has been changed to better suit the research findings on Pakistan and Bangladesh. Once again, a historical institutionalist framework is adopted to contextualise the processes of adoption and implementation of gender quotas. Each section, in this chapter focuses on a particular of actors and examines their particular roles in the adoption and implementation of gender quotas for each country.

The Role of Civil Society (Interest Group)

Civil society comprises one of the three sectors that are conventionally identified in any country. The other two are the include public sector or the government and the private sector or the profit-seeking enterprises (Jorgensen 1996). Broadly speaking, civil society can be defined as those organisations that exist between the level of the family and the state and enjoy a degree of autonomy from the state and the market, and provide a counter-balance to the power of the state and the market (Jorgensen 1996). Civil society may also be viewed as organised activities by groups or individuals either performing certain services or trying to influence and improve the society as a whole, but which are not part of government or business (Jorgensen 1996). In Pakistan and Bangladesh, civil society includes indigenous community groups, mass organisations, cooperatives, religious societies, trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and professional bodies. In the context of women's political empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh, women organisations are the principal representatives of civil society.

Women's organisations perform key roles for establishing the legitimacy of gender equity policy goals and for building a feminist constituency to promote the goals (Goetz 2003). These matters are explored in this Chapter using the analysis of feminist writers to examine women's movements regarding their specific socio-cultural contexts, their capacity to challenge institutionalised and gendered perceptions of the roles, rights and need of women. A large body of literature on women's organisations in developing countries suggest these organisations not only act as means of empowerment but also contribute to the democratisation process (El-Bushra & Lopez 1993; Goetz 1995; Jaquette 1994; Moser 1993) According to Goetz (2003), the supremacy and commitment of the women's movement derives from their gender equity lobbying by civil society and the latter's capacity to include people's demands and interests. Karl

(1995, p. 19) declares women's organisations as one of the principal means through which women participate in the life of a society. The efforts of these organisations for equal social and political rights for women have been important factors that led both the governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh to bring about changes in policies regarding women's participation in politics.

Pakistan's Case

In the case of Pakistan, *The All Pakistan Women's Association* (APWA) was the first non-governmental women's organisation established in 1949. Rana Liaqat Ali Khan, wife of the first prime minister of Pakistan, was its founder (Zafar 1991). APWA was formed as a non-political voluntary organisation engaged in non-controversial activities open to all women without any discrimination of class, religion or caste. The objective of APWA concerned the welfare of women by creating social, educational and cultural consciousness among them and improving opportunities for participation in economic development (Afzal 1999). As the state establishment did not feel threatened by its activities, government institutions were ready to sponsor its activities. Through the first lady's leadership and its dependence on government funding, the state was able to exercise control over the direction of the women's movement (Zafar 1991; Gardezi 1997). APWA conveyed women's voice to parliament against some anti- women social practices, such as the absence of any laws of inheritance. Through the efforts of APWA, this issue was raised in the national assembly and a law on property inheritance was passed in 1951 (Afzal 1999). On a negative note, APWA had an urban bias and was led and populated by influential upper class and politically connected women from urban areas such as wives of the first two prime ministers of Pakistan. This meant that APWA was not only controlled by the family-dominated political hierarchy of the country but also played an insignificant role in

empowering the vast majority of women, in spite of being the sole representative of women's rights in Pakistan until 1981(Gardezi 1997).

The anti-feminist policy of Zia's regime from 1977-1988 provided a stimulus for the emergence of a new aggressive strain of feminism among Pakistani women. Repression, discrimination and the reversal of women's rights stimulated a wide spectrum of activism (GRAP 2009). The proclamation of severe punishment for women under the *Hudood Ordinance 1979* motivated a group of urban middle and upper class educated women to form a women's rights lobby called 'Women's Action Forum' (WAF) (Mumtaz & Shaheed 1987). Following WAF, many other women's organisations were established around the same time in Pakistan. Like WAF, they were reacting to the anti feminist policies of the Zia regime but at the same time, these organisations coincided with international donor agencies promoting women's welfare strategies in line with the WID approach (Ostegaard 1992; Mumtaz & Shaheed 1987). The era marked a high point of collaboration among different women's organisations and individual activists in a joint struggle for women's rights. WAF, in association with other organisations, established a pressure group against the military regime to promote and protect the social, economic and political rights of women in Pakistan. The introduction of some pro-women legislation by the military government, like increasing the quota for women's representatives from 10 to 20 in national assembly, can be seen as government actions to appease these political pressure groups and to appear to be conforming with international thinking.

As reported in Chapter five, constitutional provision for the reservation of seats for women in the legislative assemblies of Pakistan expired after the 1988 elections. As a result, women's representation dropped drastically to less than 3% in the legislative assemblies of Pakistan between 1990-1999 (see Table 5.10). This alarmed WAF and other women's organisations as

quota were seen as necessary to ensure women's political representation in a patriarchal society (Anita & Gilani 2001). Thus, WAF and its allies started demanding the restoration of reserved seats and even an increase in the number of reserved seats (Anita & Gilani 2001). They also demanded modification of the method of selection of women representatives on reserved seats. They wanted indirect election of women to be replaced by direct election where women would compete only with women (Bari 2002). Women and many civil society organisations campaigned for the reservation of 33% seats for women at all levels. WAF had reiterated its argument for the direct election of women through reserved seats during the Beijing Conference 1995 (Mumtaz 2005).

WAF along with several other women's rights organisations undertook a national campaign to push for the reservation of seats for women in legislatures (Anita & Gilani 2001). The struggle of women's organisations in Pakistan was based on negotiations with the government rather than on agitation (GRAP 2009). After lengthy negotiations with legislators, ministers and members of 19 political parties, a policy proposal was prepared and signed by 1,500 women's civil society organisations and media (Kamal 2000). As a result, all four provincial assemblies unanimously passed resolutions demanding the restoration of reserved seats for women. However, between 1988 and 1999, successive governments did not restore women's seats despite the country being twice led by a female prime minister (Benazir Bhutto) and once with a government with a two thirds majority (Nawaz Sharif).

While Benazir Bhutto blamed the lack of simple majority in the parliament during both of her tenures as prime minister, the reason for Nawaz Sharif government's reluctance to restore women's seats was its alliance with religious parties who were against the introduction of such quotas. Reserved seats were eventually restored in 2001 for women and increased to 33% of total

seats at local level, 20% of total seats at provincial level and 17% of total seats at national level during the autocratic regime of General Pervez Musharaf, Although he restored democracy in 2001, he maintained the presidency while still in military uniform. This supports the contention expressed in Chapter 2 that developing countries tend to adopt gender quotas during autocratic rules or democratic transitions as in such circumstances, rulers want to demonstrate to the international community that they respect international commitments and also look after the rights of marginalised groups such as women (Dahlerup 2003, 2006; Squires 2007; Krook 2009).

The women's organisations saw the increase of seats for women in parliament as an outcome of their relentless campaigning together with continuously mounting international pressure on successive governments of Pakistan (Mumtaz 2005; ADB 2004b). The women's organisations were demanding direct election for reserved seats for women but this was not acted upon by the government of Pakistan (Hassan 2006). In 2002, WAF lodged an appeal in the High Court against indirect election of women on reserved seats on the grounds that it was merely benefitting certain political parties, as the allocation of reserved seats for women depended on the strength of political parties in legislative assemblies (HBF 2008). They argued that such selection of women was a denial of the basic rights of women who wanted to be elected on the basis of their competency in a favourable environment where women could compete only with women rather than on the basis of being female relatives of influential political families. The appeal was turned down by the High Court (ADB 2003; AF 2008; PDO 2011).

In 2002 and 2005, at the time of local government elections in Pakistan, various NGOs assisted election authorities in the process of women's registration in electoral rolls, carried out voter education and initiated debate and discourse at the local level on a wide range of local and national issues across the country (AF 2003, 2005 ADB 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b; PDO

2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d; Jabeen & Jadoon 2009). The massive mobilisation of women as candidates (see Table 5.13 in Chapter 5), voters and supports of candidates became possible due to the efforts of various women's organisations especially in the absence of political parties' involvement in elections at the grassroots level. These organisations were funded by international development organisations to assist the process of empowering women at grassroot level. *Aurat Foundation*, *Pattan Development Organisation*, *Shirkat Gah* are some of the renowned NGOs that worked for an effective women's participation at the local level. Relevant information was communicated by these organisations to women contestants and voters through specially developed materials, seminars, conferences, media, and active lobbying and advocacy. After the elections, NGOs continued their involvement with elected women representatives through various capacity-building programs. A number of networks of women councillors were also facilitated by these organisations (Arif et al. 2008; AF 2005).

In summary, women's organisations in Pakistan played an important role in putting pressure on respective governments for the effective political participation of women in politics. Although, they had organisational capacities to pressurise governments through processions and demonstrations, they believed in change through dialogue. They consistently engaged with various governments through media campaigns and negotiations. At domestic level, various women's organisations supported each other for the common cause of women's political emancipation, and internationally, they were well connected to various donor agencies to get financial assistance for their efforts. The government partially acceded to the demands of these organisations by allocating reserved seats for women at national and local levels but turned down their demand for direct elections for women in reserved seats at national and in the upper tiers of local government. This aspect is discussed in detail in at the end of this chapter.

Bangladesh's Case

In Bangladesh, mass movements organised by women organisations played an important role for the socio-economic and political uplift of the women of Bangladesh (Halder 2004). Whether it be the 1997 reforms of local government or the restoration of women seats in national parliament, women's organisations played critical roles for the political empowerment of women (Begum 2009). At the time of independence, there were at least 12 women's organisations, primarily based in urban areas and oriented towards welfare activities (Amed 2005; Hashemi 1995). *Bangladesh Mahila Parishad* (BMP), a mass-based organisation established in 1970 was the most prominent among them. The goals of BMP were to establish a society based on gender equality, democracy and peace. BMP took a well defined position in the areas of women's education, health and employment. BMP now has over 94,000 members. It still works for social, economic and political rights that will remove discrimination and attain equality for the women of Bangladesh (BMP website).

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has assured women's political participation at national level since its inception in 1972 and at local level since 1975, just four years after Bangladesh's independence. Women's organisations of that era concentrated only on welfare activities for women (Begum 1997; Hashemi 1995). It was only during the autocratic regime from 1982-1991 that women's organisations started mobilising women for the exercise of their political rights. In 1988, the government abandoned the quota for women at the national level (see Table 6.8) and women organisations in collaboration with political parties organised rallies, processions and public meetings for the restoration of the quotas (Das 2005). Women's organisations initiated political awareness campaigns among the women of Bangladesh about

their voting and political rights. Due to these efforts the military government reinstated women's quota seats in 1990 (Hadi 1997).

By 1990, the number of women's organisations had grown considerably. In order to directly involve women of Bangladesh in the process of development and empowerment, women's organisations started to emphasise the social and economic empowerment of women of Bangladesh as a precondition for political empowerment. Women's organisations had begun to establish links with NGOs working on poverty reduction initiatives in order to focus on creating awareness among women at grassroots level about their social and economic empowerment that would lead to their political empowerment (Husain 2000; Hadi 1997). These organisations expanded their activities into rural areas and started mobilising rural women on a regular basis. Thousands of women field workers were engaged in projects of women's organisations intended to link poor women with development resources and services (Khan et al. 2005). These efforts opened up windows for women to take part in regular group meetings and activities. Such meetings provided training for political participation of women at the local level. Organisations such as BMP, *Ain O Salish Kendra*, Women for Women, *Nari Pakkha, Ubining, Nijera Kori, Saptogram*, were all not only running programs to enable poor women to obtain access to credit, employment, income, literacy, health care, and family planning but also enhancing the participation of women in the political process (Hadi 1997). Training programs were established to educate women for positions of leadership (Husain 2000).

Towards the end of 2001, when the provision for reserving 30 women's quota seats in the national parliament lapsed, several women's organisations mounted a concerted effort to mobilise opinion and to create the necessary political will for the restoration of women's political quotas (Islam 2003). Before the dissolution of parliament in 2001, almost 20 women's groups

mobilised by BMP lobbied the government, political parties and parliamentarians (Islam 2003). Women activists carried on street activities, formed human chains, and staged rallies and symbolic protests advocating an increase in the number of reserved seats in the parliament and the introduction of direct election for women in those seats. As a result, in 2004, the government increased the number of reserved seats from 30 to 45, although the system of election remained the same. In 1997, the government had partially conceded the demands of women's organisations to allow direct elections on reserved seats for women at the lowest tier of local government. No quotas were reserved for women at upper tiers of local government (*upazila parishad* and city councils*)*. Women's organisations mounted a court challenge to the provision of indirect election at national level but court rejected their challenge (Khan et al. 2005).

BMP played a key role in promoting women's formal political participation and worked on training programs for women political representatives. Identifying the female councillors' main problems as isolation, hostility and disregard from male colleagues, BMP decided to intervene in three *union parishads* in one district to address these problems (Mukhopadhyay & Meer 2004). The BMP strategy was to develop support groups for women councillors at urban councils and *union parishad* levels. Each support group was made up of 15 women from the representative's constituency and BMP members. The support group was trained by BMP to enable them to provide assistance to the elected representatives. The support group organised constituency meetings, built alliances with influential political leaders and linked the representatives with elected and appointed government officials. They also built the capacity of elected women and organised joint training for women and men elected to the councils (Parveen & Leonhauser 2004). The result was that trained elected councillors started active participation in council's proceedings. They succeeded in getting development projects for their areas, took up gender

specific issues and set up women's cells within their constituencies to listen to the issues of women. BMP followed up through evaluation of their initiatives and monitored the performance of trained elected councillors (Khan et al. 2005).

Apart from women's organisations, NGOs focusing on poverty reduction played an important role in the social and economic advancement of women in Bangladesh (Hadi 1997). The majority of the NGOs in Bangladesh operate different micro-credit programs as a means to empower women through poverty reduction (Islam 2003; Khan et al. 2005). One example is the Grameen Bank. Apart from this, a large number of NGOs have been working in Bangladesh to ensure equal rights for women in every sphere by expanding their roles in the political arena and carrying out training programs. For example, the Association of Development Agencies of Bangladesh (ADAB) played a proactive role in national politics during the mass movement of the mid-1990s (Khan et al. 2005). In the election of 1996, ADAB coordinated a Democracy Awareness Education Program through which 15,000 trainers ran awareness-raising workshops across the whole country. This program contributed to an impressive voter turnout of 74 percent in the election of 1996 (Ashman 2000). As women are the focal points of concern for most of the NGOs in Bangladesh, they have gained immense knowledge of electoral procedures from these programs. One example is the effort *of* Gono Shahajjo Sangstha to encourage its landless group members to contest as candidates in local *union parishad* elections in the Nilphamari district. Such activities of NGOs have built awareness among women regarding their involvement in the political process and created pressure on the government to make changes in their policies regarding women's political participation.

In summary, women's organisations in Bangladesh have played an important role in creating political consciousness and awareness among women. Various micro-credit programs initiated

by NGOs and focusing poverty reduction organised rural women into small groups. These micro-credit schemes created a sense of empowerment among poor women of Bangladesh. This sense of empowerment was enhanced by women's organisations through their capacity-building programs. These women's organisations pressured government on different occasions for the restoration of women's reserved seats at national level and through direct elections. Direct election was also an objective for women in local-level councils. The pressure exerted by women's organisations on different governments was partially recognised by government which restored and increased women's reserved seats at national level but denied the induction of direct elections. Women were however, allowed to engage in direct elections at the lowest tier of the local government, a minor victory for women's political advancement in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Comparison of the Roles of Women's Organisations in Pakistan and Bangladesh

In both Pakistan and Bangladesh, women's organisations were initially focused on socio-economic emancipation of women until the advent of autocratic rule when the rights of women were severely violated. Women's organisations in both countries realised the importance of political awareness among women so that they could raise voice for their socio-economic and political empowerment. Women's organisations provided the platform for women's political training as well as to voice against patriarchal structures and fundamentalism in both countries. These organisations exerted pressures on governments for the recognition of the political rights of women and demanded reserved seats for women at national and local levels through direct elections. Male-oriented governments and other political actors of both countries were willing to allow quotas as this would suit their interests for establishing numerical supremacy in national parliaments but they were not willing to open up female selection processes for these quotas.

This suggests limits to the pressure that can be exerted by women's organisations in both countries.

The Role of Donor Agencies (Interest Group)

Bilateral and multilateral donor organisations play important roles in influencing the development policies of recipient countries to incorporate investments in gender equality (OECD 2008; Burall et al. 2006). The succession of world conferences on gender issues as well as various international agreements served to establish this relevance of the adoption of gender equality policies through development aid (Burall et al. 2006; DAC 2008). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was the crucial international agreement that led to international organisations such as the UN to influence aid-receiving countries to include gender equality policies in their development plans. This was followed by the *1995 World Summit for Social Development in* Copenhagen. Some 117 heads of state set themselves the goal of eradicating poverty and recognised gender equality as an essential condition to achieve this aim. *The Fourth World Conference on Women* 1995 adopted the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), a comprehensive agenda for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and 189 governments committed themselves to ensuring that a comprehensive gender perspective would be reflected in all of their internal and external policies and programs. The Millennium Declaration 2000 reaffirmed commitments to the promotion of gender equality by both donors and recipients. Improving gender equality and empowering women was declared goal three in a list of eight goals of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Goal 8 of the MDGs recognised that wealthy nations have a responsibility to participate and act as partners in the development of poorer nations. Gender equality and the improvement of women's welfare are also evident in other MDGs such as the aim to improve

maternal health under MDG 5 or the push for universal primary education in MDG2. Improving gender equality was also seen to influences poverty reduction and growth directly through women's labour force participation, productivity, and earnings as well as indirectly through the beneficial effects of women's empowerment on child well-being (UNDP 2000; UN Women Website).

Such developments encouraged bilateral aid agencies and multilateral organisations to place gender equality and women's empowerment as top priority for sponsoring development projects in recipient countries. In Chapter 2 it was suggested that countries in democratic transition and in conflict-ridden societies there was a likelihood of adopting gender quota policies (Dahlerup 2006; Araujo and Gracia 2006; Hughes 2007; Squires 2007; Krook 2009). Sweeney (2004) however, argued that though democracy does not necessarily guarantee protection of human rights, it has been widely observed that democratic political systems and institutions encourage all citizens, including excluded populations such as ethnic minorities or women, to participate in the governance of their countries. Therefore, democracy may be considered as a facilitating factor for promoting the equal rights of men and women. For this reason, international humanitarian organisations and donor agencies exert pressure on governments of developing countries to adopt quota policies for women (Sweeny 2004). According to Bush (2011) this is pursued both directly in post-conflict peace operations and indirectly by encouraging countries to indicate their commitment to democracy and equality by adopting gender political quotas. The responsiveness to gender equality norms varies with according to how much a country is donor-driven: the more aid-dependent, the more effective the donor pressure even in countries where women have low status (Bush 2011; BDP 2008; Davis & McGregor 2008; Nadoll & Hussain 2008). As Pakistan and Bangladesh, are both heavily dependent on bilateral and multilateral aid

for their development initiatives, they have a strong incentive to comply with the policies and values promoted by donors (Islam 2005; Ameenuzzaman 2007; Mumtaz 2005). Sobhan (2007, p. 11) pointed this out for Bangladesh but it also seems accurate for Pakistan:

> [In Bangladesh]…..the dependence on policy advice from donors still remains strong. The psychology of dependence on donors has become ingrained in the psyche of military, political and bureaucratic decision makers in Bangladesh who remain firmly convinced, even today, that donors hold their political lifeline in their hands

Most of the donor agencies for Pakistan and Bangladesh, including both bilateral and multilaterals provide funds to promote gender equality and related programs and projects. After BPFA 1995, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies have shifted their focus from WAD to GAD activities. This meant donor agencies were no longer focusing on the integration of women in development, rather they were paying attention to mainstreaming gender through the social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities and expectations to women and men (Moser & Moser 2005; Chapter 4). The trend of multilateral and bilateral donors towards gender mainstreaming can be judged from the fact a quarter of all bilateral official development assistance allocated worldwide by sector—$5 billion out of $20 billion in average annual commitments is focused on gender mainstreaming (DAC 2008). Multilateral and bilateral donors in Pakistan and Bangladesh focus on gender equality to ensure that gender equality and women's human rights are fully incorporated into national development processes (DFID 2006, CRP 2008).

By conforming to the policies of donors, both countries have introduced gender equality measures for the uplift of women. For instance, Pakistan has established a permanent National Commission on the Status of Women in 2000*;* introduced reserved seats for women at national, local and provincial assemblies in 2001; passed The Women's Protection Bill in 2006*;* approved

The Gender Reform Action Plan in 2005. Similarly, Bangladesh has also increased the number of reserved seats for women both at national and local levels and enacted various laws for the protection of women as described in chapter 6. But still 15 years after the ratification of BPFA, women constituted only 20% of the parliament of Pakistan and 15% in that of Bangladesh despite women constituting half of their populations. The question arises as to why, in spite of donor funding and measures adopted by both countries, there is still a large gap between men and women in social, economic and political indicators for Pakistan and Bangladesh as is evident from the data presented in Chapters five and six. Pakistan ranked 132 out of 134 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2010 while Bangladesh ranked 82. Donor's preference to fund short-term and one-off projects for gender equality, as opposed to long-term and strategic programs and lack of accountability in donor-funded projects are the two major drawbacks in the implementation of gender quota policies in Pakistan and Bangladesh (Sogge 2002; Quibria 2010; CPR 2008).

Many of the donor-funded projects on women's empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh tend to follow a multi-pronged approach i.e., a combination of service delivery, human resource capacity building, institutional strengthening and policy advocacy. While combining approaches together may create more efficiency and achieve short-term targets, it is long-term programmes that actually add to continuity and sustainability and more importantly, build systems. Gender equality requires not just initiation of a project but rather a complete behavioural and attitudinal change in mindset, this can take decades to achieve (Burall et al. 2006). This relates to the concept of gender mainstreaming presented in chapter 3 that gender mainstreaming as a concept is multidimensional and the process of unfolding various dimensions makes it a lengthy business and unlike WID or WAD, communities or countries do not necessarily get short-term results.

Lack of accountability in donor funded projects is the next drawback. The donors do not take into account bureaucratic dysfunctions, opaqueness and incapacity to be able to know where and how accountability will ultimately rest. Neither do donors blame their own machinery for the failure of their funded project. Simply` handing over a grant or a loan to government agencies, NGOs or running the project through hired consultants does not lead automatically to accountability for those funds. Gender equality requires accountability from governments and donors alike, i.e. both providers and recipients are responsible for the outcome of investments made on development priorities.

The Role of Political Parties (Interest Group)

Political parties are the core mechanisms for channelling political demands in a democratic political system (Molyneux & Razavi 2002). Goetz (2003) identifies political parties as one of the most important institutions for transmitting citizen's voice into political decision making. She argues that only coherent party structures and clear political vision are supportive of the inclusion of the interests of socially excluded groups in policy making. In an interactive process, demands for political representation through a gender advocacy lobby create pressures on parties to adopt particular policies politics (Norris 2004). But many instances have been noticed in developed and developing countries where political parties have created an inhospitable environment for gender advocates (Goetz 2009). Political parties of Pakistan and Bangladesh do not give priority to gender advocacy. According to Inglehart (et al. 2004), to understand how far it is possible to push the gender equity agenda through political parties, factors like the membership structure of political parties and the ways policies are addressed in party manifestos have to be examined. These matters along with the placement of women candidates in general elections and attitudes of political parties towards gender quotas are now discussed.

Membership Structures of Political Parties

Most political parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh are male dominated and neglect women and women's interests. Whereas women have played very visible and important roles at the higher echelons of power as heads of state (Sheikh Hasina Wajid, Khalida Zia in case of Bangladesh and Benazir Bhutto in case of Pakistan) and at the grassroots level in social movements, they have been under-represented in political parties, particularly in the upper reaches of party hierarchies, as party officials and as members of key-decision making bodies. The under-representation of women in party politics reflects deep-rooted prejudices concerning women and politics. The belief that men are better equipped than women to exercise power in the public domain is widespread and deeply held in Pakistan and Bangladesh (see Chapters five and six). Political parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh have done little to provide women access to their networks and resources that would enable them to ascend the ranks of party hierarchies. Tables 8.1 and 8.2 show the membership structures of major political parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh and their nomination of women as general candidates in recent elections.

Table 8.1 clearly indicates that in Pakistan and Bangladesh, women find little space in party hierarchies. National standing committees (NSC) of political parties are basically responsible for taking all important decisions before, during and after elections and working committees (WC) of political parties are responsible for implementing these decisions. Table 8.1 shows that in both Pakistan and Bangladesh, women comprised less than 15% of NSCs and WCs of political parties. In most cases, the figure was below 10%. This clearly reflects that political parties are still male dominated and women are not given due importance in the major committees. It is interesting to note that *Jamat-i-Islami* in both countries has no woman in their party structures.

Table 8.1 Membership Structures of Major Political Parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh

Pakistan 2008				
Name of the Party	**Party Structures**	**Total No. of Members**	**No. of Female Members**	**Percentage of Female Members**
Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)	National Standing Committee	29	3	10.34
	Working Committee	180	14	7.77
***Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz* (PMLN)**	National Standing Committee	41	6	14.64
	Working Committee	214	23	10.74
Pakistan Muslim League Q (PML Q)	National Standing Committee	21	2	9.52
	Working Committee	141	17	8.29
***Mutahidda Qaumi Movement* (MQM)**	National Standing Committee	14	2	14.28
	Working Committee	94	9	9.57
***Awami National Party* (ANP)**	National Standing Committee	14	1	7.14
	Working Committee	59	2	3.3
***Jamat-i-Islami* (JI)**	National Standing Committee	15	0	0
	Working Committee	85	0	0

Bangladesh (2005)				
Name of the Party	**Party Structures**	**Total No. of Members**	**No. of Female Members**	**Percentage of Female Members**
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	National Standing Committee	15	1	6.67
	Working Committee	164	11	6.71
***Awami League* (AL)**	National Standing Committee	36	5	13.89
	Working Committee	65	6	9.23
***Jatiyo Party* (JP)**	National Standing Committee	31	2	6.45
	Working Committee	201	6	2.98
***Jamat-i-Islami Bangladesh* (JIB)**	National Standing Committee	141	0	0
	Working Committee	24	0	0

Source: Adapted from Ahmed 2005, AF2008

While such conservative parties do not believe in political participation of women, they did not forego their share of reserved seats for women in national assemblies in both countries. In fact, after the 2002 elections, the head of *Jamat-i-Islami* Pakistan nominated his daughter for one of the reserved seats allocated to his party. Similarly, in 2002 in the provincial elections, *Jamat-i-Islami* was able to form provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and happily accepted women's political participation including nominating female candidates for reserved seats. Likewise, in Bangladesh in 1996, *Jamat-i-Islami* nominated two women on reserved seats when it was the coalition partner of BNP (although the government only lasted for only 11 days). These examples clearly illustrate the prevalence of family politics as well as self interest in political arena in Pakistan as well as in Bangladesh. One of the female member of *Jamat-i-Islami* who was a member of provincial assembly from 2004-2004 started voicing against the practices of her party norms by saying:

> I belong to *Jamat-i-Islami* (JI), but I have a lot of hard discussions with my party colleagues. This is especially when they talk about women's participation against our culture and that it destroys and disorganizes our family. But then at provincial level, where they have a lot of privileges and names and reputations, they are ready for women in politics. JI is lagging behind in addressing women's issues. Actually they are betraying their uneducated voters. I was sitting at a polling station in by-elections and I asked a woman which party would they vote for and they told me that they would be voting for Quran. This is because JI has cleverly chosen a book as voter symbol (Mueller 2005, p. 26).

The role of women in decision-making within political parties in both countries depends on family background. The female party leaders who were given places in NSCs in both countries belonged to elite political families (Mirza & Wagha 2009; Das 2005; Ahmed 2003) This once again establishes the importance of family politics in these two South Asian countries (see Chapter 4). From the above scenario, it is evident that political parties of both

countries attach little importance to placing women in the higher ranks of party structures. The section looks at the promises of these political parties in their election manifestos.

Manifestos of Political Parties

In developed countries, the reform process of political parties can be assessed through party manifestos (Ahmed 2003). But in the case of Pakistan and Bangladesh, political party reformation is a slow process since party leadership and people occupying senior positions do not encourage any reform process within political parties (Ahmed 2003; Aziz 2008). The underlying reason is the personality-based leadership and undemocratic culture within political parties. That is why in Pakistan and Bangladesh, manifestos are not taken as a measure to guide for the reforms of political parties. Rather, manifestos are presented to the public only as a document containing series of promises. The practice of issuing manifestos full of false promises in Pakistan and Bangladesh can be better understood by the views of a Bangladesh TV anchor Mahmud-Ur-Rehman, who stated:

> Party manifestos and their propagation is all to the good but unfortunately after the voting is over, political parties, more often than not, conveniently forget what they had committed to the public prior to the vote and for the following 5 years of government, the populace has no way of influencing political parties, either in government or in opposition, to act in the way that they had committed (BD News 24 6 Dec 2008 at 1:12 pm).

This statement can be tested for the political parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Pakistan Peoples Party in its election manifesto (2007) made no promises about women's political participation but it did promise to involve the Ministry of Women Development in mainstream activities and ensure women's participation at senior levels in the judiciary (Aziz 2008). As far as implementation of these measures is concerned, PPP devolved the Ministry of Women's Development from the federal level to provincial level (18th Constitutional Amendment) and no

step was taken towards ensuring women's participation at senior levels in judiciary (PDO 2011). In the case of Bangladesh, the BNP and AL in their election manifestos before the 2001 elections promised to introduce a system of direct elections for women quota seats at national level. This is yet to be achieved, in spite of the fact that both BNP and AL have been in government since then.

Political Parties and Women Candidates for General Elections

Political parties, in Pakistan and Bangladesh at national level do not prefer women as party candidates for direct elections. This can be understood from the trend of nominations by major political parties from Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the 2007 national elections, in Pakistan, there were only 11 women candidates for PPP out of 272 general candidates while PML (N) endorsed only 5 women out of 272 general candidates (NCSW 2010, 2008). In the case of Bangladesh, in the 2001 national elections, there were only 14 women candidates for *Awami League* out of 300 general candidates and BNP endorsed only 9 women out of 300 general candidates (Ahmed 2005).

This is mainly due to four reasons. First, women are not considered competent enough to solve the problems of society. This view results from the dominant norms in society. For example, widespread corruption in law enforcement agencies may create multiple problems for the general public (Khan 2008). Police, for instance, can convict anyone on wrong allegations of rape, robbery or murder. When such miscarriages of justice occur, people expect their political leaders to help them. Women are considered incapable of dealing with such matters in a male-dominated society. The second reason is the view of political parties that voters prefer male candidates and among females they choose women belonging to strong political or rich families. It is generally

believed by political parties that the female candidates of powerful families can protect the interests of political parties in the assemblies as well as among the general public. In this context, women who belonged to families lacking political influence or status have been ignored by political parties as candidates (AF 2008). Political parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh prefer only those women for general seats who are either close relatives of the leaders of political parties, wife, sister or daughter of a deceased or martyred member of parliament or those who have strong political family backgrounds (NCSW 2010; Begum 2009). The Fawcett Society in the UK undertook a research on discrimination against women in the electoral process and observed,

> Women often are treated differently to men in the candidate selection process. Women are asked questions about issues such as childcare, which male candidates are not. Old fashioned views of a women's place among selection panel members often undermine the possibility of a fair selection process (Stokes 2005, p. 64).

These Fawcett society observations for the UK are even more appropriate for Pakistan and Bangladesh where women as candidates in elections are not selected on a fair judgment, but rather on biased perceptions of their roles in society.

Political Parties and Gender Quotas

In Pakistan and Bangladesh, political parties have not considered gender quotas to be a priority issue. In the constitutional history of Pakistan, political parties never exerted pressure on governments to adopt gender quotas (NCSW 2010). Lack of interest of political parties in enhancing women's political representation in Pakistan was one of the contributing factors that marginalised women in elected assemblies at national and local levels throughout its parliamentary history (Table 5.10). Only General Pervez Musharaff introduced significant

gender quotas at all levels of government in 2002 (see Table 5.10 and 5.12). Once quotas were introduced in Pakistan, political parties saw advantage in using these quotas as to boost their numbers in national and provincial assemblies. The electoral reforms of 2002 made graduation from university as the minimum level of education for being a member of national and provincial assemblies. This disqualified many male political leaders of feudal elites from contesting elections. Their solutions to pertaining power were to recruit their graduate female relatives for reserved seats (NCSW 2010). Political parties also saw advantage in maintaining control of women representatives through the selection process of indirect elections. Political parties ignored the long-standing demand of civil society and women's organisations for direct election of women to reserved seats.

This was also the case for political parties in Bangladesh. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, from its inception guaranteed some form of women's representation at national level but the provision for national level lapsed in 2000. No political party tried to restore it until 2004, when the BNP government under international and domestic civil society pressure reintroduced quotas. But, as in the case of Pakistan, longstanding demands of civil society for direct elections for reserved seats were ignored by political parties. To appease civil society and women's organisations, the BNP government increased the number of quota seats from 30 to 45. Critics (Das 2005, Ahmed 2005) argued that BNP increased the number of seats in the wake of coming elections as BNP, in alliance with JIB wanted to secure more seats from the reservoir of reserved seats to establish a majority in the parliament.

Comparison of the Roles of Political Parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh

Both Pakistan and Bangladesh share similarities in terms of the role of political parties towards women's political empowerment. Political parties follow patriarchal social structures. Male candidates were preferred over female candidates in general elections. Women were generally ignored in internal party structures and only women belonging to elite political families were placed in national standing committees of political parties. In both countries, political parties adopted behaviours disapproving of women as political activist despite the major political parties in both countries having been headed by females. As heads of their respective political parties, Benazir Bhutto, Hasina Wajid and Khalida Zia did little efforts to place women at higher levels in party structures and nominate increasing and significant numbers of women during general elections. Political parties of both countries have not regarded gender quotas as a priority issue. They took actions to introduce quotas when pressured by civil society and international organisations but were not enthusiastic advocates. This attitude changed, once quotas were introduced. Political parties become very interested and enthusiastic supporters as they could see quotas as ways of increasing party numbers, thus promoting party interests inside legislatures. In order to ensure control of quota representatives, parties ignored calls for their direct election but maintained their commitment to indirect election, a mechanism that ensured party control.

The Role of Appointed Government Actors (Bureaucracy)

Elected political actors in any country come and go. They do not stay permanently. Appointed actors of bureaucracy perform their roles as permanent actors (Shafqat 1999). Public servants have to perform functions, such as, to inform the ministers and parliament with complete and

accurate data presented objectively and in time; to advise ministers on the analysis of data and appraisal of options in which the latter can have confidence; to implement ministerial decisions; and to be responsible to ministers and parliament for their actions (or inaction) with particular reference to the safeguarding of public funds and ensuring effective value for money (Shafqat 1999).

In the light of the functions of bureaucracy listed above, bureaucracy performs an important role in the implementation of policies. However, the role of bureaucracy towards implementation of gender quotas remained ambiguous in both countries. The existing data reflects only on the reforms within bureaucratic structures in these two countries such as quotas of men and women within public service or efficiency of bureaucracy through gender mainstreaming. No research has been done in Pakistan and Bangladesh on the role of bureaucracy for the adoption and implementation of gender quotas. It is unknown at present as to whether bureaucracy had any influence on quota policy in Pakistan and Bangladesh, although, it seems unlikely as this was an essentially political matter, not one requiring bureaucratic analysis and recommendations.

The Role of Media and Research Organisations

In democracies, media play an important role not only in the free flow of information but also in creating awareness among people about issues ranging across the social, cultural, economic and political landscape. Pakistan has a vibrant media that enjoys independence to a large extent, in spite of political pressure and occasional bans by the state. Currently, Pakistan has 49 TV channels. Additionally 28 TV channels from other countries have broadcast rights in Pakistan. There are 129 FM radio stations and 42 newspapers that are published in 11 languages (IMS

2009). Despite this freedom, Pakistan's media concentrates more on political sensationalism instead of quality journalism, as International Media Support says (IMS) says:

> After having been liberalised in 2002, the television sector experienced a media boom. In the fierce competitive environment that followed commercial interests became paramount and quality journalism gave way to sensationalism (IMS 2009, p. 6).

Bangladesh's media are less developed. There are 16 TV channels, 30 Bangla and 12 English newspapers and only three radio channels at national level (Media Directory Bangladesh). Bangladesh's media is not as free as Pakistan's present-day media. It is still under governmental control to a large extent. Currently, the print media is enjoying considerable freedom in Bangladesh. They bring lapses and excesses of the executive to the notice of the public and thereby make them accountable. But exclusive government control over state run electronic media like radio and television runs contrary to the concept of free flow of information and transparency. In Bangladesh, both radio and television are solely owned and controlled by the government. As a result, these two media have acted as the spokesmen of the government or rather the party in power. Impartial information and views, in most of the cases, are not usually broadcast. Moreover, views of the opposition political parties and groups do not receive proper and adequate attention by the state-run radio and television (Media Directory Bangladesh).

In both countries, media has played a significant role in sensitising public, government and the international community to socio-economic and political discrimination against women. (Mukhopadhyay 2004; Mumtaz 2005). Whether it be the issue of Mukhtaran Mai *of* Pakistan, a woman who was gang-raped by eight people on the orders of a *jirga*, or Khadiza Khanom of Bangladesh, a union councillor member who was harassed by the chairman of a union *parishad* (see next Chapter) the issues were well reported in media until the victims got justice. Media has

pressurised governments to legislate for the protection of women. However, Women's political empowerment through quotas has not been extensively advocated through media of both countries. The role of media remained insignificant in both countries in pressurising respective governments to adopt and implement gender quotas.

Likewise, as is stated in the introduction of this thesis, most of the research on gender, especially GAD-inspired gender mainstreaming work on Pakistan and Bangladesh, has been done on the elimination of discrimination against women. In the case of Bangladesh, most research has been done on the microcredit programs of women's empowerment. In the case of Pakistan, gender equity in the context of decentralisation has been the remained the focus of research. Much less has been written on the women's political empowerment through quotas. It is only recently (after 2003) many governmental and non-governmental organisations in Pakistan and Bangladesh such as the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics; Pattan Development Organisation; Aurat Foundation; Shirkat Gah (Pakistan) and Centre of Social Studies University of Dhaka; Centre for Policty Dialogue Dhaka; Bangladesh Mahila Parishad; Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha starting producing research papers on women's political empowerment with the assistance of donor agencies. As the research process about gender quotas in Pakistan and Bangladesh is still in initial stages, it is too early to assess the impact of such research in both countries.

The Role of Elected Government Actors

The adoption and implementation of gender political quota systems is often a top-down strategy in which women are given political positions from above either through constitutional amendments or voluntary political quotas adopted by political parties (see Chapter 2; Dahlerup 2006; Squires 2007; Krook 2004). As has been explained previously, political parties in Pakistan

and Bangladesh have not given priority to the adoption of quota measures. This leaves the option to government actors to adopt top-down strategies for the inclusion of women in representative institutions at national and sub-national levels. But, in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the majority-plurality (MP) system is prevalent and means that the ideologies of a single political party dominate the parliament. The roles of government actors in Pakistan and Bangladesh are therefore intermingled with the roles of political parties. It has been reported in previous sections that political elites in Pakistan and Bangladesh adopted gender quotas either in a move to gain international recognition in a phase of democratic transition (as in the case of Pakistan) or to honour various international commitments and from pressure exerted by national and international organisations. This interpretation is endorsed by Krook (2006a, p.4):

> They [state actors] are the most powerful voices for and against quotas because of their broad visibility and their capacity to institute or reject quotas within political parties and national assemblies……They occasionally purpose quotas, but are most often the targets of campaigns waged by civil society and international and transnational actors.

The role played by government actors in Pakistan and Bangladesh for adopting quota measures and subsequent women's political empowerment is discussed here. The discussion starts with the roles of female prime ministers in both countries.

The Role of Female Prime Ministers in Pakistan and Bangladesh

Pakistan and Bangladesh have had women leaders but they did and continued to do little to improve the conditions of their countries' women. These leaders were not only heads of state but also heads of their political parties, positions which they gained through the influence of their families in politics (see Chapter 3). In the case of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto made some token gestures to improve the situation of women by upgrading the women's division established by Zia-ul-Haq to the status of a ministry and establishing a women's bank run only by women.

However, she did not tackle more serious and substantive issues like the reservation of seats for women because of strong political opposition from conservative forces (Bari 2002, 2003).

In the case of Bangladesh, Khalida Zia, became the first female PM of the country but being an ally of the conservative *Jamat-i-Islami Bangladesh* (JIB), she did not dare to introduce any women's welfare reform. (Ahmed 2005). Hasina Wajid, the second female PM of Bangladesh did not restore reserved seats for women when provision for them lapsed in 2000. Khalida Zia's government in an attempt to gain support of the international community restored women's seats at national level and increased their number from 30-45 but refused to accept demands from women's organisations for direct elections instead of reserved seats (Khan et al. 2005). Hasina Wajid introduced the Local Government Act 1997 that acceded to the longstanding demand of civil society for direct elections of women on reserved seats at local level but Hasina Wajid in 2009 repealed the 2008 ordinance of the preceding caretaker government that gave 30% representation to women at *upazila* level. In short, female heads of state did little or nothing to advance female quotas and women's empowerment in general.

Adopting and Implementing Gender Quotas by Elected Government Actors in Pakistan and Bangladesh

The different political histories of Pakistan and Bangladesh have shaped the nature of both states. Extended military regimes transformed Pakistan into a militarised society and a centralised state that let feudalism continued to rule the rural masses (Mumtaz 2005). Bangladesh switched from a parliamentary system to military rule, then to a presidential system and back to parliamentary rule but with authoritarian attitudes from its political leaders whatever the type of regime (Mumtaz 2005). In Chapter 3, it was observed that specific institutions are based on conventions

and for the political leaders of Pakistan and Bangladesh, self-interest is a strong convention. Various authors in the literature of women's empowerment through quotas endorse this point of view that government actors adopt political quotas to gain personal or party benefits rather to achieve the objective of women's political empowerment (Krook 2006; Araujo & Gracia 2003; Goetz & Hassim 2003; Chowdhury 2002). Krook (2006a, p. 6) argues:

> The promotion of other political ends as a motivation for quota reform takes a number of different forms. It generally comes into play when elites decides to play quotas in order to achieve other political goals, like consolidating power over party representatives and political rivals.....to handpick 'malleable' women who will not question or challenge the status quo.....establish national and international legitimacy of a particular regime.

Examples of such self-interest in the adoption of political quotas can be found in the actions of the leaders of Bangladesh and Pakistan. In Bangladesh, Hasina Wajid's government, in 1997, introduced direct elections for quotas for women at local union *parishad* level but in 2009, immediately after coming to power repealed the 2008 *upazila parishad* ordinance introduced by the interim government that gave a 30% quota for women at the *upazila parishad* level, the middle tier in local government. In Pakistan, local government reforms were introduced through the Local Government Act 2001 by the then military dictator, General Pervez Musharaf. This act introduced reserved seats for women at union council level. Local government elections were held in Pakistan in 2002 and 2005, but after the restoration of democracy in Pakistan in 2008, no local government election has been held which means local governments have not been functioning since 2008 and women are again not participating in politics at local government level.

In line with historical institutionalism, as the literature suggest (Chapter 3), it is pertinent to explore why a choice was made or why a certain outcome occurred. For this purpose, it seems

imperative to critically analyse why, in 1997, Hasina Wajid's government adopted quota policies and why in 2009, the government of the same party with the same prime minister repealed the 2008 ordinance. Likewise, it has been noticed from the above discussions that various civil society orgainsations have been demanding direct election of women to reserved seats at national level, but government actors in both countries have continuously declined their demand. These issues are analysed.

Firstly, to examine the 1997 reforms of local government in Bangladesh, the analysis must start from 1995 when Bangladesh signed the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in 1995. Being the signatory of BPFA, it was international obligation of Bangladesh to introduce some reforms for women at national and local levels. Although some forms of quotas already existed at both national and local levels, donor agencies were demanding an increase in gender quotas at national level while women's organisations and civil society lobbying for the direct mode of elections on quotas at both levels (Das 2005; Rahman 2008). At that time Khalida Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was in power in coalition with *Jamat-i-islami Bangladesh* (JIB) (Ahmed & Ahmed 2001). JIB was against women's political participation but was favouring the government of a female prime minister. This illustrates how self-interest played a motivational role among political actors in Bangladesh. JIB was not in favour of introducing any reforms for women's political participation either at national or local level. As this would threaten BNPs coalition numbers and tenure in office, BNP did not introduce any reforms for women's political empowerment (Ahmed 2005).

BNP was succeeded by a government headed by Awami Laegue (AL) and leadership by Hasina Wajid from 1996-2001. Khalida Zia's government had been severely criticised by civil society including women's organisations as well as by international media for not honouring her pledge

to BPFA 1995. Hasina Wajid's government found it politically advantageous to initiate reform processes and convert public as well as international opinion in her favour (Chowdhury 2003). Apart from the 1997 local government reforms, she also signed the Chittagong Hill Tract Agreement 1997 with local insurgent militia that awarded her the UNESCO Peace Prize in 1998 (Ahmed 2003; Begum 2004). She claimed on various occasions that she wanted to create more opportunities for women's participation at local level and that was why she initiated the Local Government Act 1997 (Ahmed 2005). But such claims did not tally with her repeal of the Local Government Ordinance 2008 that had been introduced by a caretaker government that had awarded 30% representation to women at the *upazila parishad*.

The ordinance had created a local government commission to oversee the activities of the *upazila parishad* and abolished advisory roles of members of parliaments for the chairmen of the *upazila parishads.* These advisory roles of MPs established their supremacy over the activities of the *Upazila Parishads* and were established through *Local Government Act 1992* by Khalida zia's government and were reinstated in *Local Government Act 1997* by Hasina Wajid's government (Rahman 2008). The Ordinance of 2008 abolished this supremacy of MPs over *upazila* affairs by making it more autonomous and independent with enhanced participation of women. But government actors at national level could not tolerate the acts of a caretaker government that had ceased their authority over local governments. The government revoked the 2008 ordinance and passed the Local Government Act 2009 that again established the authority of MPs over the affairs of *Upazila Parishads*. Local Government Act 2009 did not retain women's 30% seats at upazila level as earlier introduced by the 2008 ordinance (As-Saber & Rabbi 2009). Ironically, Local Government Act 2009 was hailed by the opposition whose leader was also a women (BNP). This clearly proves the earlier stance that for the government of Bangladesh (and

Pakistan) following of self-interest is the most important convention, instead of working for a particular cause such as women's political empowerment.

In the case of Pakistan, it was only the military regime of Pervez Musharaff in 2002 that introduced gender quotas for high percentage of women at national and sub-national levels as compared to previous gender quotas. The reasons for this introduction of gender quotas have been explained in previous sections. As a result of reforms introduced by the Musharaff government, nearly 40,000 women were selected as councillors in all three levels of local government which is an impressive number for a country where women are seen by many men as not more than a commodity. But after the departure of the autocratic ruler in 2008 and the restoration of democracy, there has been no local government elections in Pakistan. The reason for this is that during the autocratic regime, governments at every level were controlled by one person but during democratic regimes, governments at each level run independently (Khan 2001). Local government is a provincial responsibility in Pakistan. It is for provinces to hold elections for local government. In the absence of elected local governments, provincial governments are responsible for development activities of local councils through the members of provincial assemblies. But, since 2008, provincial assemblies seem to be disinterested in losing their authority over local government affairs and local institutions. Federal government blames provincial governments for not taking any action to hold elections at local level but in three out of four provinces along with the capital, there is a government of Pakistan Peoples Party and its allies. This shows that federal government as well as provincial governments are least interested in implementing international commitments of transferring power to grassroots level and women's empowerment through functional local governments, rather are more interested in retaining authority over local government affairs.

Finally, it has been noted at that civil society and women's organisations have been long demanding for the direct elections of women to reserved seats at national level but governments of both countries have consistently ignored their demands. For the direct elections of women into assemblies, women's groups argue that indirectly elected MPs do not feel any accountability to their constituencies. Rather they feel obliged to their party superiors (Krook 2004). But governments and political parties visualise women's reserved seats as a device that may help them to form government and to establish their numerical majority over competitor parties. The lack of commitment of the government of Pakistan and Bangladesh towards women's political empowerment can also be judged from the ministerial positions women have been given, in both countries.

Women's Share in National Cabinets in Pakistan and Bangladesh

In the discussion, it has been explained that governmental actors in Pakistan and Bangladesh introduced gender quotas on the basis of international commitments and pressure exerted by national and international organisations. These were not advocates of women's political empowerment. This is evident from the share of ministerial positions given to women parliamentarians at national level in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Tables 5.11 and 6.9 (Chapter 5 and 6) clearly indicate that women have been given inadequate shares in national cabinets by governments of both countries. It is only recently that both Pakistan and Bangladesh have female foreign ministers. Hina Rabbani Khar (Pakistan) was appointed in 2010 and Dr Dipu Moni (Bangladesh) was appointed in 2009. Otherwise, both countries have generally appointed female ministers to portfolios that are considered relatively less significant in the context of the prevailing cultures in Pakistan and Bangladesh (BMP 2008,

PDO 2011). For example, in both countries, the portfolios for women's development, social welfare, population and culture have been offered to women ministers as they are considered less important compared to home affairs, finance, water and power, commerce and foreign affairs. This is mainly because in both countries, women are not considered as equals of men in administering important ministeries, in spite of the fact that Bangladesh has been ruled by female prime ministers for the last twenty years (with a gap of three years from 2006-2009) and Pakistan was also ruled by a female prime minister twice. Tables 5.10, 5.11, 6.8 and 6.9 show, despite women, being present in assemblies due to gender quotas, they are still at disadvantageous position as far as their inclusion in cabinet is concerned.

Comparison of the Roles of Elected Government Actors in Pakistan and Bangladesh

Government actors in both Pakistan and Bangladesh have not adopted gender quotas for the purpose of political empowerment of women. Rather, gender quotas were adopted to gain political advantages at national and international levels. In Pakistan, a military based government introduced quotas at national and local levels to gain legitimacy from international actors. Once introduced, political elites favoured gender quotas at national level as they saw how they could be used to gain numerical supremacy. In Bangladesh, two female prime ministers introduced gender quotas at local and national levels, but as in Pakistan, not with a purpose to politically empower women but to gain political advantages from the female MPs numbers. Government actors in both Pakistan and Bangladesh turned down the longstanding demands of women's organisations for direct elections on reserved seats. This would threaten their control of female quota MPs.

Summary

The chapter has described the roles played by various actors in the formulation and implementation of gender quota policies in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Women's organisations, donors and political parties have been selected as interest groups in Howlett and Ramesh's classification. The chapter proves through discussion that women's organisations and donor agencies have played significant roles in both countries towards pressurising governments to adopt gender quotas. Lack of accountability in donor funded projects and donor's preferences to finance short term projects instead of long term projects are some limitations in the implementation of donor funded quota projects. Media in Pakistan and Bangladesh have played effective roles in campaigning against socio-economic discrimination against women in both countries but did not play significant roles in pressurising governments in both countries to introduce or implement gender quotas. Research organisations in both countries have recently starting focusing on gender quotas. Previously, they had been mostly engaged in research on socio-economic discrimination against women and poverty-related issues. The role of bureaucracy or appointed actors in the adoption and implementation of gender quotas is yet to be ascertained as no research has been done so far on this particular aspect but is likely to be minor. State actors government and political parties tended to shy away from legal and institutional reforms to remove barriers to women's equal political participation. These actors adopted and implemented gender quotas with the objectives of gaining political advantages at national and international levels, rather than to politically empower women. Even female prime ministers in Bangladesh and Pakistan remained unwilling to introduce reforms for the substantial political empowerment of women.

9. Discussion and Comparative Analysis: Women's Political Empowerment or Endullment in Pakistan and Bangladesh

The objective of this chapter is to analyse whether women in Pakistan and Bangladesh have gained empowerment or whether they remain endulled (Dew 1997). As described in Chapter 3, empowerment can be distinguished from endullment according to five criteria: people's involvement in decision making processes; people having appropriate boundaries to work with; people's ability to track their own performance; people's sense of ownership about their work and organisation; and people's sense of pride about their work and organisation (see Table 3.1). In this chapter women's performance at national and local level in Pakistan and Bangladesh is examined against these criteria. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part analyses the performance of women parliamentarians at national level in both countries. The second part evaluates the performance and experiences of women councillors at local government level.

The Role and Performance of Women Parliamentarians in Pakistan and Bangladesh

In this section the role and performance of women parliamentarians at national level in Pakistan and Bangladesh are assessed. In Pakistan's case, the performance of women parliamentarians is

evaluated for the 12th parliament (2002-2007) as this marked the introduction of reserved seats at national level by the military government. Where necessary, women in the 13th parliament (2008-todate) are cited briefly.

In the case of Bangladesh, the performance of women in the 5th (1991-1996) and 7th (1996-2001) parliaments has been examined. In 2000, quotas for women at national level lapsed and were only revived in 2004 leading to women's selection to reserved seats in 2008-09 for the current parliament (Chapter 6). It is too early to assess the performance of the current parliament and there were few women in the 8th parliament (2001-06) due to the lack of quota seats. That is why the 5th and 7th parliaments have been selected to assess the performance of women parliamentarians.

Sense of Ownership

Pakistan's Case

The total number of seats for the 12th parliament was 342, out of which, 272 were general seats and 60 seats were reserved for women. The remaining ten seats were reserved for non-Muslims. The total strength of women in the 12th national assembly was 73, out of which 60 were selected for reserved seats, 12 were directly elected to general seats and one was selected on a reserved seat for non-Muslims. Before the 2002 elections, it was in the 1985 and 1988 elections when women had previously been selected for reserved seats (8.4% and 4.6% respectively). In the three elections prior to 2002 (1990, 1993 and 1997), there were no reserved seats for women in the national assembly. Out of the 73 female members of the national assembly (MNA) in 2002, 28 belonged to the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-i-Azam) (PML Q), with 22 of them selected on reserved seats and seven on general seats, out of which one was made to resign in

order to allow the prime minister to occupy a lower house seat in by elections (Mirza & Wagha 2009).

This reflected the attitude of political parties in Pakistan towards female parliamentarians that PML (Q) did not ask one of its 122 male MNAs to vacate a seat for the by-election. Moreover, there were various instances where women MNAs were discouraged from participating on the floor of parliament and they were not represented adequately in cabinet and parliamentary committees (discussed in detail in the next sections). This clearly addresses one of the criteria for being empowered, that people have a sense of ownership about their organisation. In the case of women parliamentarians in Pakistan, their ownership of the institution to which they belonged was limited and male-dominated. They had to depend on the decisions of the leadership of political parties.

Bangladesh's Case

The total number of seats for both the 5th and 7th parliaments was 330, out of which, 300 were general seats and 30 were reserved for women. The total strength of women in the 5th national assembly was 34, out of which 30 were selected for reserved seats and four were directly elected to general seats (see Table 6.8). The total strength of women in the 7th national assembly was 38, out of which 30 were selected for reserved seats and eight were directly elected to general seats.

Firoj (2002) conducted interviews with 57 MPs from the 5th and 7th parliaments of Bangladesh. From the 5th parliament, interviews were conducted with 26 MPs. One held a general seat and 25 were in reserved seats. From the 7th parliament 31 female MPs were selected for interview, out of which 28 held reserved seats while three had general seats. The majority of women interviewed (90%) complained that although they had been selected to national parliament

through reserved seats they felt little ownership about their status in assembly. Derogatory attitudes of male colleagues towards female MPs selected on reserved seats was given as the reason for women's repugnance towards their institution. This is quite evident from the following comment of a female MP

> Always, we were targets of some defamatory comments. We were called 'rented MPs'….. We were nothing but bonus to our male colleagues…… Some of our male colleagues called us MPs of five thousand takkas….. Firoj (2002, p.27).

Increased gender awareness in political institutions is one of the objectives of introducing quota measures. Lovenduski and Karam (2002, p. 189) have thus argued that,

> Increased gender awareness is not simply a matter of including women [in political institutions], but also a sensitivity that women are no more a universal category than are men and that class, age, ethnicity, race, physical ability, sexuality, parenting and life stage have a determining effect on women's lives much the same as they do on men's lives.

But in the cases of Bangladesh and Pakistan, institutional patriarchal structures were still reluctant to consider women on an equal basis and this was evident through their derogatory remarks against women in reserved seats. Although, such remarks received reprimands from the PM late in the 7th parliament, female MPs were still subject to discriminatory treatment from their male colleagues and party leadership (e.g. lack of availability of development funds and restricted roles in decision-making bodies.

Decision-Making

Pakistan's Case

Male bias was again reflected in the choice of ministers. Out of 28 women belonging to the ruling PML(Q), the government appointed only one woman as minister and five women as

deputy or state ministers out of the 59 member cabinet. This gave women a representation of 10.1% in cabinet. All six women included in the cabinet were elected on general seats (Bari 2009; Mirza & Wagha 2009). In Pakistan, all important government decisions are made in cabinet meetings or in meetings of parliamentary committees which are further endorsed by parliament, if required. Parliamentary committees oversee the functioning of the government. The main role of committees is to scrutinise government policies and actions and to amend legislation. The committees are empowered to deal with all matters of the ministries. All political parties nominate their MNAs to be the members of parliamentary committees. Parliamentary committees have the power to invite or summon before them any person they deem appropriate. The 2002-2007 parliament had 43 standing committees which were departmental. The analysis of the gender composition of these committees reveals that women were included as members of all parliamentary committees but their number remained insignificant (Bari 2009). There were only two parliamentary committee in which women's membership exceeded 33%. One was the parliamentary committees on Culture, Sports, Youth Affairs and Tourism (46%) and the other was the parliamentary committees on Women's Development (61%). The representation of women MPs in the remaining parliamentary committees varied between 7% and 24%. Only 9 out of 43 committees were headed by female parliamentarians (Bari 2009). This illustrates that women selected through reserved seats were not selected by political parties for inclusion in the decision-making process. Rather, they were mostly given directions to follow by the party leadership during parliamentary sessions. This phenomenon fulfilled another criterion of being endulled that people are not involved in decision-making, rather they are told what to do.

Bangladesh's Case

Like Pakistan, in Bangladesh's parliamentary system, important decisions are made in cabinet as well as in parliamentary committees. These are then endorsed by parliament, if needed. Table 6.9 indicates the inclusion of women parliamentarians into the cabinet of Bangladesh. It is clear from the table that in the 5th parliament, only three women were appointed as ministers (7.69%), out of a total of 39 members of cabinet. Similarly, in the 7th parliament, four female legislators were appointed as ministers (8.7%). In parliamentary committees, women's representation remained between 3% to 22% in the seventh parliament. There were 46 parliamentary committees in Bangladesh, none of which had a female chairperson (Firoj 2002). For women to be effective parliamentarians, they need to understand the functions of the legislature and the parliamentary language, and to be familiar with laws and regulations. To accomplish this, party leadership and parliament are responsible for giving training to women so that they can play effective roles in parliamentary proceedings. Firoj (2002) indicated that most of the women parliamentarians interviewed, although expressing the importance of parliamentary committees showed their lack of understanding of the technicalities involved in their proceedings. Also, no training was given by government or political parties. Neither demonstrated interest in the inclusion of women in decision-making positions or the involvement of women in decision-making processes which is one of the indicators for being empowered.

Appropriate Boundaries

Pakistan's Case

'People have boundaries that are appropriate' is the next criterion for being empowered. But women selected on reserved seats through indirect elections by directly elected national

assembly members in Pakistan did not have any appropriate boundary to represent their constituencies or constituents. Women parliamentarians on reserved seats faced tremendous problems in developing direct constituency bases whose interests they could represent in the parliament (Bari 2009). Bari (2009) reports that in the absence of direct constituencies, women parliamentarians were asked by their party leadership to surrender their development grants in favour of party colleagues who had direct constituencies. This deprived women's in reserved seats the opportunity to deal directly with the electorate and hampered their entry into mainstream politics. Sixteen women were selected on general seats in the 2008 elections (for the current parliament). None of them had been an MNA on a reserved seat in the previous parliament (National Assembly of Pakistan Website). This testifies the concern of various women's organisations and members of civil society that women on reserved seats have no geographical constituencies and without representing a specific section of the electorate or being able to deliver at a constituency level, their chances of winning a general seat at a later stage are seriously circumscribed (Mirza & Wagha 2009). Critics also argue that such a system of women's political representation in Pakistan has given rise to nepotism where political parties' nomination and selections are being made on the basis of family relationships and patronage instead of merit (Anita & Gilani 2001; Bari 2009, Mirza & Wagha 2009).

It is important to mention that in all international conventions, quota provisions are regarded as temporary measures until the barriers that restrict women's political participation are removed (see Chapter 2). The gender quota is envisaged as contributing to an enabling environment in which the quota provision is gradually withdrawn and women are able to compete with men for political office without any specific measures favouring them (see Chapter 2). But as seen in Pakistan, quota provisions have not eliminated the barriers against women's political

participation as none of the women previously selected on quotas were able to secure direct election as an MNA for the 13th national assembly.

Bangladesh's Case

Like Pakistan, women parliamentarians in Bangladesh selected on reserved seats were also chosen through indirect elections. In the absence of any direct constituencies, 66% of female parliamentarians interviewed by Firoj (2002) favoured the direct mode of election for reserved seats and complained that in the absence of any direct constituency, they were being manipulated by their male colleagues and were not getting equitable shares of development funds. The majority of the respondents (66%) said that since people did not directly elect them, they were not being treated with due honour and respect by their male colleagues. Moreover, in the absence of a constituency, female MPs had to seek permission from MPs elected from the general seats to implement any development project. Women respondents further mentioned that because of having no direct constituencies, they were allowed only 10% of development funds by their party leadership, the rest being distributed among male colleagues (Firoj 2002). With the absence of a direct constituency and the discriminatory attitude of party leadership over the allocation of development funds, women selected on reserved seats remained unable to win elections on general seats. Chowdhury (2002, p. 2) argues that political quotas in Bangladesh were adopted to accommodate political weakness of women in 'contesting male contenders for general elections' but political parties saw these seats as a reservoir of political power and 'have not taken proactive measures to encourage women of their respective parties to contest and claim these seats' Chowdhury (2002, p. 3).

Tracking of own Performance

Pakistan's Case

As far as next criterion for being empowered is concerned that is 'people track their own performance', female MNAs during 2002-07 in Pakistan performed well. This parliament was unique in that it had largest number of women parliamentarians (73 female MNAs) of any of Pakistan's parliaments. The Aurat Foundation (Mirza & Wagha 2009) indicated that women parliamentarians utilised all available legislative procedures such as points of order, call attention notices, submission of bills for legislation, privilege and adjournment motions and resolutions. Table 9.1 shows the performance of female and male parliamentarians during 2002-07.

Table 9.1 clearly indicates that female parliamentarians, in spite of the fact that this was the first tenure for most of them, performed actively during the five years. Table 9.1 reveals that 27% of the questions during five years were raised by female MNAs, 30% of the call attention notices were presented by female members, 42% of the private member bills were initiated by women parliamentarians, 24% of the passed resolutions were presented by women and 8% of privilege and adjournment motions were brought to the assembly's floor by women parliamentarians. The increase in participation was not only restricted to quantity but also in quality (Mirza &Wagha 2007; Bari 2009). Reports on the performance of female parliamentarians (Bari 2009; Mirza & Wagha 2009) show that the majority of interventions by women parliamentarians (40%) on the parliamentary floor related to social sector and pubic interest issues.

Table 9.1: Performance Comparison between Female and Male MNAs during 2002-07

No.	Type of Intervention	Total Interventions Moved 2002-2007	Interventions by Male Members (269 males)2002-2007)	Interventions by Female Members (73 females 2002-2007)	Percentage Share of Women Members
1	Questions (Answered)	100,99	7375	2724	27
2	Calling Attention Notices	329	230	99	30
3	Private Member Bills	240	140	101	42
4	Resolutions (Passed)	46	35	11	24
5	Privilege and Adjournment Motions	864	795	69	8

Source: Mirza & Wagha 2009

Women parliamentarians showed high level of concerns on the state of the social sector in general and education sector in particular. They had been frequently raising public interest issues such as the issue of inflation, unemployment, rising prices of utilities, drug addiction, financial support to the poor from *bait-ul-mal*, financial support to the poor suffering from various illnesses, rehabilitation of beggars, electrification, freedom of the press and media, irregularities of government contractors, rehabilitation of 2005 earth quake affectees (Bari 2009, p. 49).

Bari further elaborates that after the social sector and public interest issues, political and constitutional issues was the second area in which women MNAs participated most during parliamentary debates. They expressed their views on issues relating to the National Finance Commission, provincial autonomy, independence of the judiciary, the nuclear policy, Kashmir and terrorism. Bari's (2009) study shows that women's specific issues came third on the list of various categories of issues raised by women MPs during the assembly sessions. Women MPs were, however, more active in raising issues which concerned the general public and not exclusively women. Women's specific issues raised by women MPs ranged from violence against women, honour killings, reproductive health, trafficking of women, sexual harassment at the work place, protection and support for burn victims and survivors of violence, women's adequate representation in government bodies and discriminatory attitudes of the assembly speaker and male MPs. As a result, the national assembly passed a bill against the infamous practice of *karokari* (see Chapter 5). The bill was initiated by a female member. Another important piece of legislation passed by the 12th national assembly was the Women's Protection Bill that carried 29 amendments to the Hudood Ordinances.

Women legislators picked up issues of public importance ranging from women-related issues such as violence to issues of national importance such as health, education and environment. Thus, they were expanding the range and scope of their vision and outlook. Bari (2009) indicates that at the time of the dissolution of the assembly on 15 November 2007, there were 31 bills pending before the national assembly that were moved by women parliamentarians on a wide range of issues. These bills included The Protection and Empowerment of Women Bill 2004, The Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2004, The Control of Thalassamia Bill 2006, Pakistan Postal Services Management Bill 2006, The Agricultural Pesticide Amendment Bill 2007 and The

Special Citizens Bill 2007. This indicates that women played an active role in across a broad spectrum of issues and had gained confidence in a short span of time. The high level of education of female MNAs in 12th parliament can be related as an important factor for these women's active participation. The Musharaff government though Chief Executive Order No. 7 of 2002 regulated university graduation as the minimum qualification for being an MNA. As a result, all the female MNAs selected on reserved seats were well qualified. They were quick to learn assembly proceedings and confident to explain their points of view.

Bangladesh's Case

Tracking of one's own performance, an important condition of being empowered was found to be missing in the case of Bangladesh. When Firaj (2002, p. 30) interviewed female MPs about what kind of discussion was most interesting for them, 70% of respondents said that it was the prime minister's questions hour.

> Since she [Hasina[is our prime minister, it was my obligation to listen to her.

Another MP replied,

> It is highly enjoyable to listen to her charismatic reply.

In Bangladesh's 7th parliament, only one bill was initiated by a female member (Rabia Bhuiyan) and that was related to one third representation of women in parliament and constitutional bodies. This bill was discussed many times in constitutional committee but was never debated in parliament. When female MPs were asked why they were little interested in initiating any bill, 87.72% replied that it seemed law making was the prerogative of male MPs who rarely co-operated with female MPs to initiate any bill. Thus, female parliamentarians in Bangladesh

expressed low interest in taking any initiative and tracking their own performance. Rather they waited for feedback from an authority figure and had little sense of ownership of their work.

Quota regulations were introduced globally to change the nature of the political institutions to make them more women friendly. This involved a cultural change within patriarchal societal frameworks. But, in the case of Bangladesh, no such effort was made within the institution of *jatiya sangsad* (parliament). There was a need to arouse confidence within women MPs who, unlike Pakistan's female parliamentarians, came from a diverse educational background. All of them were not well qualified as in the case of Pakistan and for this reason they lacked confidence to express themselves properly. There was a need to encourage them through training and public speaking exposure through media and seminars. On the contrary, the roles of women MPs in Bangladesh were restricted just to establish parties' numeric strength within parliament. They were informally directed to act as 'yes persons' on the advice of the party leadership. This made them less proactive to initiate actions.

Feeling of Pride

Pakistan's Case

Reports indicate that women legislators participated in assembly sessions regularly and with less absences than male members (Mirza & Wagha 2009; Bari 2009). This showed their commitment to their roles as assembly members. Bari (2009) interviewed 20 female parliamentarians (out of 73), and 89% of her respondents said that they had attended assembly sessions regularly without any absence. Women MNAs declared that assembly attendance and participation was a matter of utmost pride for them that they were working for the nation in the most prestigious institution of the country.

Mirza and Wagha (2009) indicated that out of 73 women in the 12th national assembly, 58 were 'active' throughout the tenure of the assembly and out of the 58 active members, 25 were extremely active. Ironically, out of 25 very active members, only three belonged to the ruling PLM(Q), the rest being from opposition parties. This shows that women in the government party were less involved in decision-making processes than men and they were least encouraged to participate in debates in parliament. It was only the personal qualities of women that led them to participate actively in the proceedings of the national assembly. There were several instances when they were ignored or prevented from making interventions by the chair; they were allocated less time to speak and raise issues in the legislature; and their resolutions and call attention notices were delayed without good reason by the chair. Despite women legislators' efforts to participate actively in assembly proceedings, there were some technical issues that resulted in women being given low priority. Bari (2009, p.56) notes,

> Additionally it is also a fact that women MNAs did not have the technical know-how to draft their bills properly. Most of the 'Private Member Bills' were badly drafted. Sixty eight percent women parliamentarians reported that they did not receive any technical support or advice from parliamentary staff in drafting their bills. There was no mechanism in place within the political parties to help their parliamentarians to draft their bills.

This shows that female MNAs were feeling pride about their work and organisations, although they were little supported by their party and parliament.

Bangladesh's Case

The last criterion for being empowered or endulled is people are proud of their work and institution or people are apathetic about their work and institution. In Bangladesh, it has been found that female MPs were more apathetic than proud about their institution. Women MPs were

not happy about the attitudes and behaviours of local administration and their male colleagues as this restricted female MPs to perform their duties appropriately. Women MPs complained about various issues such as lack of funds, lack of proper facilities in the women's MP hostel, low salaries and inadequate facilities provided by the parliament secretariat to them and their families and lack of training to familiarise them with assembly functioning and proceedings. These findings clearly illustrated their dissatisfaction with the institution (Firoj 2002).

Comparison of the Role and Performance of Female MPs on Reserved Seats in Pakistan and Bangladesh

The above discussion illustrates those women parliamentarians in Pakistan fulfill two of the five criteria for being empowered. Women legislatures were active in tracking their performances and they were feeling pride about their work and organisation. However, they were not fully involved in decision-making processes; they did not possess appropriate boundaries; and they were being discriminated against by their organisations' male members. This suggests that women parliamentarians through quotas at national level were slightly empowered but increasingly endulled.They had commitment, passion and feelings of pride but lacked support from their parties, government and parliament that prevented their full empowerment.

In the case of Bangladesh, it can be safely concluded that women's political experience through quotas at national level, was extensively endullment rather than empowerment. All five criteria for being empowered were found to be negative in the case of Bangladesh. Women MPs did not have a sense of ownership about their work and organisations; they were ignored in decision making; they did not have appropriate boundaries to work with and were being deprived of their

due share of development works; they were found to be apathetic towards tracking their own performances; and they were not feeling pride about being parts of their institutions.

The Role and Performance of Women Councillors in Pakistan and Bangladesh

The Context

Various steps have been taken by governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh to politically empower women at local levels. Both countries introduced quota measures that reserved 33% seats for women through direct elections at the lowest tier of the local government (union council in the case of Pakistan and *union parishad* in the of Bangladesh). Pakistan also reserved a 33% quota for women at the other two tiers of local government (*tehsil* council and district council) through indirect elections, while Bangladesh has not reserved seats for women at higher levels of local government.

At local levels, the quota system has opened doors for socially disadvantaged and marginalised groups to win positions of formal political authority in both countries. In Pakistan, in the local elections 2000-01, nearly 67,000 women filed their nominations and about 40,000 made it to the local councils (Reyes 2002; Yazdani, 2003; Mirza 2002; HBF 2003; Rai et al. 2006; Qazilbash 2007). The situation was similar in Bangladesh where 137,909 women contested as members for 4283 *union parishads* in Bangladesh (Khan & Ara 2006; UNESCAP 2003; ADB 2004b; Ahmed et al 2003; Rai et al. 2006). This reflects their willingness to go beyond their traditional reproductive roles. Eleven women were selected as union council *nazims/ naib nazims* (chair/vice chair) and two women in Sindh were elected as district *nazims* (PDO 2006d). In Bangladesh, 22 women were elected as chairperson of *union parishad* in 2003 elections (Ahmed et al 2003; Pandey 2008).

Rai (et al 2006) argue that quotas at local level have enhanced the social status of women councilors in their families, castes and villages. The families of theses councillors started giving importance to their opinions while at community level, they also started getting special attention. It is important to have an idea about the background of these women in terms of their age, education and socio-political background. In the case of Pakistan, ADB (2004b) indicates that most women were under the age of 45 (57%), more than half were illiterate (53%), very few owned land (13%) and the majority were housewives (73.7%). Most had never contested elections before (79%), nor had their families (ADB 2004b). For Bangladesh, Rai et al. (2006) indicated a better scenario for women as compared to Pakistan. Over 40% of elected women were between 30 to 38 years of age and the majority of them were housewives; families of 53% of the women owned five acres of land; and 86% of them were literate up to the level of secondary education. But in spite of this, these women councillors lacked knowledge of the workings of the *parishad*, were unaware of government resources and programs, and had no experience of interacting with government offices or institutions.

Some councillors in both countries had performed significant development work. Stories of Pullan Mai, Bukhtoon and Shazia showed courageous women ready to challenge feudal lords and local political families from some of the remotest parts of Pakistan (UNDP 2005). The UNDP (2005) report testifies to the efforts of these women in the face of stubborn and violent opposition from traditional authority. Pullan Mai was successful in getting electricity installed in her village of Rajanpur, Bukhtoon had water pipes installed in her village in Swat, and Shazia of Chitral led a movement for women's rights to education, to vote and to choose a husband. Likewise in Bangladesh, there are various instances where women councillors with the help of local NGOs provided micro-credit facilities to poor families and arranged for their livelihood

(Islam 2003). Yasmeen took a stance in Chandipur against the practice of issuing *fatwa* (edicts) and saved the life of an innocent woman who was charged with adultery while Tulsi secured the digging up a well in a remote village of Chittagong (ADB 2008). Khadiza Khanom, a councilor from a union council of Cox's Bazaar protested against misappropriation of funds by the chairman. The chairman threatened and harassed her. Khadija reported the incident in the media and the chairman had to appologise to Khadija and every member of the council got their correct funds (Pandey 2008). These are some powerful stories of previously powerless women at local levels but these instances were too few to create an impact.

The purpose of this section is to ascertain if the steps taken by governments at the local level were really politically empowering women at local levels or was there increasing endullment, as we have seen at national level in both countries. The same criteria of empowerment and endullment have been utilised in this section, as were applied in the previous section.

Sense of Ownership

An important criterion for being empowered is that people have a sense of ownership about their work and organisation whereas if people are endulled, their sense of ownership is very limited. Various local-level studies indicate that in Pakistan and Bangladesh both indicators were found to be inclined towards endullment rather than empowerment (Islam 2008; Islam & Sultana 2006; Izhar 2008; Hussain & Hussain 2006; IFES 2009; IFPRI 2008; ADB 2004a, 2004b; HBF 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008).

Pakistan's Case

In Pakistan, women were in a minority in the union council i.e. 6 women and 14-15 men, including the *nazim* and *naib nazim* (chair/deputy chair). Being a minority combined with political inexperience, they had to ally themselves with male councillors in order to get funds. This made them vulnerable to manipulation by other council members, which might have even led them to compromise any female empowerment agenda they wished to pursue. Similar patterns of women vulnerability were evident in management at the *tehsil* and districts levels. The women councillors at these levels were elected to reserved seats by the male councillors of the district and *tehsil* respectively. This meant that the women's constituency was composed of male councillors and not the general public. Thus, women councillors had to support the politics of the group that elected them rather than pursue their own or a women's agenda. At union level, women potentially had greater freedom of action as they were directly elected, but there were barely any resources made available to women councillors to serve their constituencies (HBF 2003, 2004, 2005).

Women councillors complained of not receiving invitations to council meetings and said they were often asked to sign or provide thumb imprints to ratify council decisions (Rai et al. 2006). Nearly 50% of women councillors in a study mentioned that they attended only one meeting in the first four months of their office and that was when the election of the chairman took place (HBF 2007). This scenario indicates that women councillors were rarely involved in council affairs. They were not allowed to work independently and their presence was regarded as token and a regulatory requirement.

Bangladesh's Case

Surveys in Bangladesh reveal that women councillors were eager to participate in the council sessions. More that 50% of the respondents attended all sessions of their councils (ADB 2004b). There was however, a general complaint that these women councilors were never invited for council sessions (Rai et al. 2006). It was found that women councillors were often told to sign or put thumb imprints on already prepared documents (ADB 2004b; Khan & Ara 2006). Women's participation in budgetary sessions was nominal to negligible. In Bangladesh, 71% of respondents reported that they were not engaged in the budget preparation process and 46% of them were not involved in the approval of the budget (ADB 2008). The case study of Shaleha illustrates women being in local councils without actually participating.

> Shaleha has very little knowledge about the political system because it was all new for her. She attends every council session. She acknowledges that she and other women councillors are asked to give their consent to council proposals, including development schemes, but never invited to identify or propose development schemes (ADB 2008, p.16)

Another woman councillor from Bangladesh said that everything was controlled by men, and she could not rely on them to help her with anything. Her only power was derived from the fact that her husband was a journalist, so she used the power and threat of media to get her work done (ADB 2008).

Affirmative action does ensure that more women will come into politics, but it does not ensure that elected women will be seen as legitimate political actors. This situation was evident in the case of women at *union parishad* level in Bangladesh, where women councillors were eager to participate in council affairs but they were not provided opportunities to work enthusiastically

and constructively by the patriarchal structures within their institutions. This meant that institutions were offering limited ownership to women councillors.

Decision-Making

Involvement in the decision making is an important criterion described by Dew (1997) for being empowered. Getting the right to participate in governance through reserved seats is the first step for women in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Enormous expectations were held by civil society, donor agencies and policy makers for these women representatives in both countries with regard to substantial women's political empowerment. But the larger picture emerging from studies showed that this critical mass of women was relatively poorly equipped to influence the policy agenda for decision making in general and female empowerment in particular (Reyes 2003; ADB 2004b).

Pakistan's Case

The first step towards understanding decision making by women councillors is to examine the influence of family, community, and local landlord on these women's intentions to contest for elections. For Pakistan, a survey showed that nearly 70% of the women councillors were asked to contest elections by family, community or local landlords, 12% were asked by political parties and only 8% made the decision themselves (PDO 2006a).

Once elected, women in union councils of Pakistan did not find themselves as equal decision makers. They were dependent on male colleagues in decision making. Their male colleagues were not found to be inclusive or encouraging (HBF 2008). The women often did not get notices of meetings and they complained of being ignored. Women councillors were often expected to

endorse resolutions without knowing their contents. Moreover, women's domestic chores prevented their full participation especially in the absence of cooperation from men in the family or from members of the council (HBF 2007, 2008).

Another study conducted by the Ministry of Women Development (MoWD 2007) indicated that 35% of the women councillors in Punjab said all powers and discretion were centralised with the *nazim* (chairperson), and that they had neither autonomy, nor could they do anything that the *nazim* did not directly instruct them to do. Almost 20% of women respondents said that the local government structure had brought in no systemic change, and they had been unable to undertake work of any significance because they were given no development schemes or funds. These respondents said they were not consulted on budget formulation, and 75% of them cited unavailability of funds as a problem for being unable to work. The discussion on women's inclusion in decision making can best be concluded by quoting a remark of a female union council member in Pakistan:

> We were brought to participate in decision-making, but the creators of the system did not bother to consider the traditional mind-set of our society. We were still hopeless or rendered helpless by the intrigue and tricks of these men. (UNDP 2005, p. 35)

Bangladesh's Case

The scenario for women councilors and decision making in Bangladesh was almost the same as in Pakistan. Regarding women's decision to contest elections, 89% of the women respondents in an ADB (2004b) study said they were asked to contest elections by family or community and only 11% took the decision by themselves (ADB 2004b).

In another study, Frankl (2004) found that all powers at *union parishad* level were vested with the chairman. She indicated that most of her respondents reported that the *union parishad* had a

centralised power structure where the chairman made every decision and worked with the members he liked and in most of the cases he ignored the women councillors. The reason for chairmen's dominance, was that they were directly elected from the whole ward and not from among the elected members of the *union parishad* (Frankl 2004). As chairmen were not dependent on members of the council for their election, they were able to establish hegemony over the council. The attitudes of chairmen can be reflected from the statement of Hasnehana, a female member of a *union parishad:*

> After my oath, I went to the chairman and asked him to assign me some work. The chairman became annoyed and said the government has brought out the women from their houses to create unnecessary trouble in the *Union Parishad*? What will you do in the *Union Parishad*? Go upstairs and sit with my wife and spend your time. I do not know any work for you. No specific work is mentioned for women in the manual (Mukhopadhyay and Meer 2004 as is quoted in Mukhopadhyay 2005, p. 33).

Appropriate Boundaries

Pakistan's Case

'People have appropriate boundaries' is the next criterion for being empowered. In the case of Pakistan, the majority of women councillors at *tehsil* and district levels were elected on reserved seats through indirect elections. Therefore they did not enjoy the same status as their male counterparts, who won seats through direct elections. Although there was no legal difference between directly or indirectly elected councillors, prevailing attitudes and behaviours led to perceptions of reserved seats councillors as being inferior in status (Naz 2001; Yazdani 2003). At union council level, women councillors were directly elected but with the majority of them being illiterate and inexperienced their capacity to comprehend the system was limited (PDO 2006b; HBF 2005, 2006, 2007). A study of six districts of Punjab showed that women councillors had

extremely limited knowledge and information about the powers and functions of local government that had limited their scope of work within appropriate boundaries (PDO 2006a). At union council level in Pakistan, women councillors were not allowed to perform their legitimate roles and they were forced to surrender their legitimate rights within their functional boundaries on the chairman's orders (PDO 2006a, 2006 b). This indicates that although women councillors at union council level had their constituencies similar to their male colleagues, they remained handicapped to perform their functions within these boundaries.

Bangladesh's Case

In Bangladesh, the *union parishad* is made up of nine wards and the voters in each of these wards elect a general member, usually a man, although women are not barred from being candidates for these general seats. The quotas for women were instituted by providing three additional seats within each union *parishad*, and potential women representatives to these seats are elected by and are responsible for three wards (Rai et al. 2006). This means that women candidates have to canvass across and be responsible for an area three times the size of the area covered by general members who are normally men (Rai et al. 2006). Women are further disadvantaged by resource constraints because they receive the same budgetary and other resources received by a general member even though they must cover a larger area with more citizens.

According to the *Local Government Ordinance 1997*, female *union parishad* members will act as chairperson in at least three of 12 standing committees of the *union parishad*. But in reality, it was been found that in many of the *union parishads,* the standing committees were not formed. Moreover, where they were formed, the women members were found to have no responsibilities

despite their inclusion in the committees (Mukhopadhyay 2005). Women members were not even empowered to hand out birth certificates which is a basic function of a councillor at *union parishad* level. Later on, with the assistance from women's organisations such as Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Ain O Salish Kendra, women councilors petitioned in court and won their right to hand out birth certificates (Islam 2003).

This discussion indicates that at local government level in Bangladesh, there have been ambiguities in the demarcation of working boundaries between male and female councillors. While both male and female councillors got the same amount of development funds for their constituencies, female councilors had constituencies three time bigger than their male colleagues. Moreover, women councillors were discriminated against by male councillors preventing the empowerment of women to perform their legitimate functional responsibilities.

Tracking of own performance

The next indicator for being empowered is that people track their own performance or, if endulled, feedback comes from an authority figure, if at all. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, where it has been found that women councillors were indifferent towards tracking their performances due to various socio-economic and cultural factors as well as various disincentives by the government for working as councillors. For example, women councillors in Pakistan and Bangladesh were getting no salaries (Rai et al. 2006). These issues are further elaborated here.

Pakistan's Case

According to the ADB (2004b), more than 70% of women councillors interviewed in Pakistan were not aware of their rights and responsibilities as representatives. An even higher percentage,

more than 80%, expressed their lack of confidence in their ability to conduct meetings. Such research findings point to patriarchal society offering little or no space for women's authority and agency. As a result women become handicapped in the performance of their duties and unable to track their performances.

Women councillors faced serious mobility constraints, which affected their participation in the council sessions. Council meetings took place far from their residences, approximately 25km, and the average transportation cost was Rs300 (approx US$1 = PKR 60-80 from 2003-2005 Forex Website). As one or more family member had to escort them, this meant additional travel costs plus opportunity costs. Poor public transport systems, deteriorating law and order, and conservative social norms discouraged women from travelling long distances (Yazdani, 2003). Surveys also revealed a lack of gender-friendly infrastructure like separate toilets or common rooms for women to sit while waiting for the start of the meetings (HBF 2006, 2007; AF 2005; PDO 2006, 2006 b, 2006c). Such circumstances gave rise to a situation where women councillors deliberately started to avoid council meetings and assembly activities.

Women councillors had an average family size of 6-10 in a joint family system. Due to the gendered division of labour in households, these women had to cope with the double burden of family obligations and the activities of a councilor (Yazdzni 2003). Additionally, working in councils without any salary further encouraged women councillors to seek a division of labour between them and their male family members. Their situation was different from their male colleagues as the latter did not have to look after domestic chores, while for female councillors, attending to council affairs was an additional responsibility. Halima, a female union councillor from Pakistan, explained this situation as follows:

> It was too much for me to combine my kids, cooking, washing, cleaning, cattle and other family responsibilities with council affairs. That was why me and my husband divided our home and council responsibilities. Naturally as a man, he could not perform duties at home, so he chose council affairs and I chose home affairs. We requested the chairman about this who happily agreed (MoWd 2007, p. 56).

Bangladesh's Case

The situation in Bangladesh was similar to that in Pakistan. Reports from Bangladesh cite women councillors, who out of their ignorance of council affairs, cultural traditions and lack of incentives offered by the government, such as working without salaries in councils, prioritisedhome responsibilities and let their male family members handle their council affairs (ADB 2004b, 2008). The male family members often tooki care of development activities on behalf of female councillors and were at times even found attending council meetings. Rupa, a female councilor, said;

> Division of work is important for running home affairs. As a woman, it was more suitable for me to look after my family affairs and as a man, it was suitable for my husband to look after external affairs. So informally, he used to perform my council affairs on my behalf (ADB 2008).

The above evidence indicated that women were not keen to track their performances at *union parishad* level.

Feeling of Pride

The last criterion for being empowed is the feeling of pride about one's work and organisation. If people are endulled, they are apathetic about their work and organisation. Women councillors in Pakistan and Bangladesh were usually unable to gain access to council funds for schemes identified by their constituents. This limitation on women councillors' influence over resource

allocation constituted a serious constraint on women's activities and effectiveness as councillors. Because these women were elected to reserved seats and were perceived as inferior to members in directly elected seats, a discriminatory mindset prevailed in the local councils against them.

Various instances were reported in both Pakistan and Bangladesh where women councillors were harassed and discriminated against (HBF 2005, 2006, 2007; PDO 2006 a, 2006b, 2006c; Mukhopadhyay 2005; ADB 2008). This created feelings of aversion among female councilors about their institutions Countering this was the increased social status of women as councilors within families and communities. It was pressure exerted by families and communities remained other factors that mostly persuaded women in both countries to contest subsequent elections at union council/*parishad* levels.

Pakistan's Case

The story of Jannat Bibi (from Pakistan) clearly brings home the dilemma women councillors faced in a complex and unfamiliar system in a male-dominated political environment. Winning a seat in the union council was not the hard part for Jannat Bibi. But the first day the council met, she discovered that along with the other women councillors she was not allowed to attend (UNDP 2005). The women stayed outside the meeting hall, angry and embarrassed. Determined to exercise their right to sit in the council, Jannat and a few other councillors returned early the next morning, bribed the sweepers and locked themselves inside the hall. When the *nazim* and other councillors came, the women demanded their right to participate in the council sessions. The *nazim* appeared ready to hit them, but seeing defiance in the women's eyes, especially Jannat's, he relented and agreed to let the women councillors attend the council meetings. It was her first time in politics and, like the other women councillors, they were all unaware of what

they were supposed to do and they never gained support from their male colleagues or council to make them feel at ease (UNDP 2005).

In a highly stratified and gender-based society, women council members were not viewed separately from their identity as 'women.' It was evident that women local representatives did not have specific responsibilities and their opinions were not heard given the negative attitudes of male colleagues (PDO 2006a, 2006b, 2006 c). These factors gave rise to insecurity among the women members.

Another point of discrimination towards women councilors in Pakistan was that these councillors did not get honoraria and travel or daily allowances, whereas male councillors did (HBF 2006, 2007, 2008). It was difficult for women councillors to meet transport costs out of their own pocket, as most of them were economically dependent on the male members of their families. This was a very serious impediment to equal participation of women councillors with their male colleagues. All these circumstances led to the point where women councilors did not feel pride about their institution and work which was a condition of endullment.

Bangladesh's Case

Attempted exclusion was also a theme for Aparna Rani who was a *union parishad* member of Moulvibazar, Bangladesh. Her husband, who was a primary school teacher, encouraged Aparna to compete in the union parishad election. She was elected to a reserved seat. During the early stages of her time in the union parishad, Aparna did not face any problem but the situation changed when she started to be more vocal than other women members and often argued with the chairman. The chairman did not support her active participation in the meetings and tried to teach her a lesson by spreading rumours about Aparna's friendly relationships with a male

colleague who assisted her in her *union parishad* activities. This affected Aparna's married life. Finally she had to leave the *union parishad* (Shamim & Kumari 2002).

Another important factor that deserves special mention is the economic structure of the society. In Bangladesh, the economic structure of the society has been mostly dominated by males. If women earn any amount, they do not have the freedom to spend their money. At the local level in Pakistan, the majority of the women have been engaged in household work rather than in income generating activities. But even if they have income-earning jobs, the amounts of the allowances these women members were occasionally paid in Bangladesh were very low (only 350 Tk which was approximately equivalent to US$5 in 2004-05- Forex Website). These low earnings could not bring any noticeable change in the life styles of women councilors. This created feelings of aversion among women councillors about their institutions.

Comparison of the Roles and Performance of Female Councillors on Reserved Seats in Pakistan and Bangladesh

In conclusion, women councillors, in Pakistan and Bangladesh were generally found to be endulled rather than empowered. However, women's representation through quotas in the local governments in Pakistan and Bangladesh was still a significant advance. Though there is limited evidence showing either that there has been change in women's empowerment, transformational change takes time. Signs of change are emerging, albeit tentative and scattered. More importantly, one of the pillars of progress has been laid. Women stand to gain ifthey can assert their rights and participate more equitably in council activities.

10. Conclusions and Policy Implications

Women constitute half of the world's population but they are under-represented in political institutions throughout the world. The global average for women's parliamentary representation is 19.3% (IPU Website). In the vast majority of developing as well as developed countries, political power rests in the hands of men. Continuous marginalisation of women from political power concerned women rights activists across the globe to pressurise governments and international organisations, especially the United Nations to introduce reformative processes for the political empowerment of women. Declaration of a decade from 1975-1985 for the development of women; adoption of CEDAW 1981; establishment of UNIFEM in 1984; the *Fourth World Conference on Women* 1995; Security Council's Resolution on Women Peace and Security 2000; and the goal three of the eight Millennium Development goals proclaimed by the Millennium Declaration 2000 were the most important steps taken by the United Nations for the development and empowerment of women at global level. *The Fourth World Conference on Women 1995* adopted the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) that required all member states to adopt 'positive measures' or quotas for the inclusion of women in political institutions at national and sub-national levels.

Some 189 countries signed BPFA. Feminist groups around the globe also favoured the adoption of gender political quotas. The following years witnessed a rapid increase in the adoption of gender quotas. After 1995, almost 100 countries adopted quotas for the political empowerment of women either through constitutional means or through volunteer adoption of political parties. 'Fast track' and 'incremental' are the two models described by Dahlerup (2006) for the adoption of gender quotas. The fast track model represents those countries who have adopted gender quotas after BPFA 1995 such as a number of Latin American and African countries. The incremental model represents countries that had been applying gender quotas for a long period, such as Nordic countries. The two case studies selected for this research, Pakistan and Bangladesh, adopted gender quotas on fast as well as on incremental track, as in both countries there has been a long history of meager political quotas at national and local levels (Rai et al. 2006). After 1995, gender quotas were applied in both countries on a larger scale. This research focused on identifying and analysing the introduction, implementation and impact of such political quotas for women at national and local levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The research was guided by three research questions. The first was to identify structural barriers that restrict women from active political participation in Pakistan and Bangladesh; the second was to determine the roles played by various governmental and non-governmental actors towards adoption and implementation of gender political quotas and the last one was to assess the degree of empowerment attained by women at national and local levels in both countries.

As a first step in researching these quota measures in Pakistan and Bangladesh, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken. The literature review was broadly divided into two sections; one related to gender quotas and the other related to women's political empowerment. The literature review enabled the construction of an analytical framework, which guided the

collection of secondary data and its subsequent analysis. Key elements of the framework facilitated the pursuit of the aims of the thesis to examine the adoption, implementation and impact of quota measures in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The research was contextualised in Chapters 5 and 6. They set out the special context of socio-economic and political conditions of the women of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Then the data relating to political quotas were systematically set out in Chapters 7 to 9. The research found more similarities than variations in the findings of political empowerment of women in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Chapter 7 explored various structural barriers that have operated at social, economic, political and cultural levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh and restricted women from actively participating in politics. Patriarchal social structures; secondary social statuses of women; women's economic subordination; women's educational deficit in both countries; particular interpretations of some religious practices such as *purdah* (veil) and issuing of *fatwas* (edicts); feminisation of poverty; patriarchal trends in political parties; and voters' biased attitudes towards women were found to be persistent structural barriers that restricted women from actively participating in politics. These barriers prevented the creation of an adequate supply of women political actors. Social and cultural views about women in society and traditional gender ideology continued to hamper women's access to leadership and decision-making in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Gender based gaps in educational attainment, less employment opportunities and women's low income impeded women's access to economic resources, creating obstacles to funding political campaigns.

The concentration of domestic responsibilities as women's concerns including child and elderly care, washing, cleaning, cooking and various unpaid agricultural jobs was a major stumbling block for women in their career advancement in politics. Moreover, religion continued to be

exploited in both countries. Women were treated according to the particular conservative interpretations of selected verses. But, only males interpreted these religious tracts and they were quick to issue *fatwas* (edicts) in case of any opposition to their pronouncements. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, the research found that daughters are discriminated from birth to death. Women, in both countries continued to suffer from domestic violence including sex selective abortions, wife battering, sexual violence, polygamy, child marriage, dowry and extra judicial killings.

Patriarchal attitudes within political parties led to strong preference for men over women in politics and helped to explain women's persistent under-representation in elected assemblies on in Pakistan and Bangladesh. As Dahlerup (2006) has observed, political parties behaved as gate keepers to disallow women from entering politics. The attitudes of political parties, together with voter bias restricted women's access to representative bodies. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, voters have generally exhibited bias against female candidates due to their inferior social status. This has discouraged women in both countries to seek general seats during elections.

Due to all the above barriers, quotas as an approach of gender mainstreaming were applied in Pakistan and Bangladesh to redress the imbalance between males and females in politics. Gender relationship as the structural relationship between men and women in Pakistan and Bangladesh was a relationship of domination and subordination. Individually, there were, however, some instances where women dominated men in politics. Women in both countries had served as prime ministers of the countries (Benazir Bhutto, Khalida Zia and Sheikh Hasina). But these were exceptions and their high office was due to the tradition of family politics which is prevalent in in South Asia. But across the histories of Pakistan and Bangladesh, women as a group were subordinated to men. This has been due to various socio-economic, cultural and

religious practices that have collectively placed barriers against women's political empowerment.

These barriers are inter-related and thus reinforce each other necessitating the imposition of gender quotas without which women of both countries would not be able to enter competitive electoral politics. Gender quotas are generally intended as temporary measures until the discrimination against women in the political and public life of a country are eliminated (BPFA & CEDAW). In the cases of Pakistan and Bangladesh, these temporary measures will need to remain in force until the obstacles indicated above are eliminated. Until then, women will have to rely on gender quotas for their political empowerment.

Chapter 8 examined the roles of various actors who supported and opposed the adoption of gender quotas and their subsequent roles in assuring or opposing quota implementation. The research found women's organisations and donor agencies as actors responsible for pressurising governments to adopt quota measures and political elites either from political parties or government as actors responsible for the weak implementation of quota measures. The effective implementation of quotas was seen to largely depend on the political elites' motivation and enthusiasm to recruit women candidates which was found to be lukewarm in the case of both countries.

It was discovered from the research that in Pakistan and Bangladesh, women's organisations advocated and lobbied governments of both countries to adopt women friendly policies, introduce new regulations to protect women's rights and to secure appropriate representation of women in political institutions and public offices. They energetically advocated about women's rights to hostile autocratic regimes in both countries in the 1980s. Women's organisations

provided platforms to voice against fundamentalism and patriarchal structures in both countries. They pressurised their governments to introduce reserved seats at national and sub-national levels through the direct mode of election. The male political elites in both countries partly acceded to the demands of women's organisations by adopting gender quotas at national and local levels but, in line with their patriarchal ideology, they declined to open up the female selection process to direct elections.

As considerable amounts of the development budgets of Pakistan and Bangladesh come from foreign donors , the dependence on policy advice from donors has been strong in both countries. After BPFA and MDGs 2000, donor agencies became active all over the world in support of gender quotas and women's empowerment. They placed gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment as a top priority for sponsoring development projects in recipient countries. Pakistan's autocratic government, in order to get international support and recognition, announced gender quotas at national and local levels in 2002 and 2001 respectively. Partly pressurised from the donors' demands, Bangladesh's government, in 1997, introduced local government reforms that allowed women's direct election to reserved seats. Another government in 2004 restored and increased the number of women's seats from 30 to 45. Despite these achievements, the research found that in spite of all the assistance from the donor agencies, implementation of gender quotas in Pakistan and Bangladesh failed to get all of the desired outcomes. This is partly because of the focus of donor agencies on short-term projects instead of taking a long term approach, as is desirable in case of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is a multi-dimensional concept and the process of unfolding various dimensions makes it a lengthy process and countries do not get immediate or short term results. Lack of accountability in donor-funded projects was found to be another limitation in the implementation

of gender quotas in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Accountability was not clearly spelled out in the case of donor funded projects in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Donors neither blame recipient country's bureaucracy nor their own machinery for the lapses in any aid-dependent project. For the successful implementation of donor funded projects on gender quotas, mutual accountability between donors and recipients is a pre-requisite that has been lacking.

Most of the political parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh have done little to advance the gender equity agenda. Most political parties in both countries have been male dominated and neglect women and women's interests. Despite ruling political parties in both countries having been led by women, their membership structure and operational processes have remained gender biased with little representation and influence of women in the upper reaches of party hierarchies. Some conservative political parties in both countries used religion as an instrument to disqualify women as political leaders. Other political parties following the social patriarchal trends also preferred men over women. Political parties in both countries discouraged women as general candidates for election. Although, before election political parties made pledges to take necessary steps for women's political participation and empowerment, these pledges were hardly implemented after the elections on one pretext or another. Political parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh have not considered gender quotas to be a priority issue and they never exerted pressure on governments to adopt gender quotas. They took actions to introduce quotas when pressured by civil society and international organisations but were not enthusiastic advocates. Once quotas were introduced, political parties supported quota measures as through quotas they could enhance party interests inside legislatures by boosting their numbers. In order to control the choice of quota representatives, parties ignored calls for their direct elections but maintained their commitment to indirect elections, a mechanism that ensured party control.

In both Pakistan and Bangladesh, elections have been run on a majority plurality system leading to single political party domination of parliament. That accounts for the congruence between the roles played by the political parties and government actors in relation to the adoption and implementation of quota regulations. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, gender quotas were introduced to honour various international commitments and from pressure exerted by national and international organisations, while Pakistan in addition to that also adopted gender quotas in a move to gain international approval in a phase of democratic transition. Apart from this, the research found that the government actors in both countries did not favour quotas as a means of politically empowering women but supported it to gain numerical supremacy in legislatures. They obtained this by rejecting longstanding demands of women's organisations for direct elections to reserved seats. This would threaten their control of female quota MPs. The female prime ministers of Pakistan and Bangladesh remained reluctant to introduce measures for women's empowerment either due to strong opposition from conservative political forces (as in the case of Pakistan) or being an ally of the conservative political parties (as in the case of Khalida Zia of Bangladesh). The female heads of state did little to advance women's empowerment in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The media in Pakistan and Bangladesh, although played an important roles in raising general awareness about various discrimination against women in both countries and in promoting women's socio-economic emancipation. However, the media remained insignificant in both countries regarding the adoption and implementation of gender quotas. Likewise, research organisations have done a commendable work on women's socio-economic empowerment and GAD-inspired activities on gender mainstreaming in Pakistan and Bangladesh. But, there has been little research about women's political empowerment through quotas. It does appear that

research organisations in both countries have started quality research on women's political empowerment but it is too early to assess the impact of such research in both countries.

Chapter 9 examined the impact of quota regulations on women parliamentarians and councillors in Pakistan and Bangladesh and found that the objectives of various international resolutions signed by the governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh for women's political empowerment through quotas were not achieved. The political participation of women at national and local levels in both countries remained increasingly as 'token representation' and, in most cases, women behaved as 'proxy candidates' for their political parties. Women elected through quotas were found more loyal to party elites than women who contested general seats. This is because of the variation in the nature of constituencies. The former do not have direct constituencies and have felt obliged to follow the instructions of their party elites while the latter, selected through general seats, can have confidence and resources to act more independently. That is why; the research found that in Pakistan and Bangladesh, there were more women ministers selected from general seats than from quota seats.

Although gender quotas have given large number of women a chance to claim space in politics at national and local levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the research found that the experiences of women selected on quotas at national and local levels have been largely pessimistic. The gender quotas in both countries instead of improving women's political autonomy and empowerment actually emphasised their marginality in politics. At national level in both countries male-dominant political structures remained reluctant to consider women on an equality basis. Women selected on quotas were merely considered as vote banks in legislatures for political parties and were victims of derogatory remarks of male colleagues. Women parliamentarians were less involved in decision-making bodies such as parliamentary committees and cabinets than men;

deprived of their share of development funds in the absence of a direct constituency; least encouraged from their party and colleagues in taking initiatives for legislation and other parliamentary affairs; discriminated against by male colleagues on the use of the assembly floor for participating in assembly activities; and lacked technical knowledge and training from political parties and parliament. This demoralised women parliamentarians, especially in Bangladesh. In Pakistan, women parliamentarians though victims of the same factors performed better due to their better educational levels compared to women MPs in Bangladesh. But, female parliamentarians in Pakistan gained little support from their male colleagues, society, political parties and parliament itself.

While female parliamentarians in Bangladesh were not actively involved in assembly proceedings that was not the case in Pakistan. The research found that most of the parliamentary interventions by female parliamentarians in Pakistan related to the general public interest, social sector, constitutional and political issues, and women-specific issues. This challenged the impression of male parliamentarians in both countries that women are not interested in constitutional or political reforms or issues related to the general public. Women parliamentarians in Pakistan proved that women are capable of performing the roles of political representatives.

At local level, women councillors were exposed to complex political systems, handicapped by illiteracy and lack of capacity; faced conservative religious attitudes and the issuing of *fatwas* (edicts) against them; were marginalised in decision-making due to the prevailing patriarchy; lacked the ability to access development funds; combated ambiguities in the description of functions of women councillors; and exhibited a serious lack of confidence when newly entering the political field. The disempowerment of these elected representatives is evident from the

research findings. These women councillors in both countries had to seek permissions to attend public meetings of the councils from their male family members; they were economically dependent on their male family members; they seldom received invitations from the councils to attend sessions; they were least involved in decision-making and were made to sign official documents without participating in their determination; and were involved in the 'politics of absence' by delegating their official responsibilities to their unelected male family members while they attended to domestic chores. This all contributed to the powerlessness of women councillors. Prevailing patriarchal structures, women's subordinated status in society, women's economic dependence on male family members and the non-acceptance of women in a public role were all found to be reasons for women's disempowerment at local levels in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

As has been demonstrated in this research, the introduction of political quotas for women in both Pakistan and Bangladesh has elements of both success and failure. On the side of success, women have been able to assume seats in legislatures at both national and local levels, and in increasing numbers. However, this numerical advance has not been matched by qualitative improvement in empowerment for `women. In both countries they have battled entrenched patriarchy and political structures that put them under the control of senior male colleagues. The women representatives are thus both included and excluded—included into the chambers of official decision-making but largely excluded from influencing that decision making. Women from prominent political families at both national and local levels have certainly achieved high position in both Pakistan and Bangladesh but they have done little to advance women's interests. They have observed the tenets of patriarchy and worked only to advance party and family interests. There are further measures that can be taken to make quotas work better for women,

but, as this thesis has shown, significant gains in women's empowerment will only occur through accompanying advances in the social and economic spheres. As has been demonstrated, the battle for women's empowerment in Bangladesh and Pakistan must be fought on many fronts. The research presented in this thesis can seen as making gains on one of these battlefronts and being representative of the emerging second generation of of gender quota research which is enhancing analysis and action in the cause of women's empowerment.

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Appendix 1: Socio-Economic Features of Pakistan

<table>
<tr><td>Life Expectancy at Birth (2010)
63.39 Years
Male
63. 3
Female
65.46</td><td>Population Density
214.3 persons/km^2</td><td>Population Growth Rate (2009-10)
2.05%</td><td>Fertility Rate (2009-10)
3.6 children born per woman</td><td>Crude Birth Rate (2009-10)
32 births/1000 population
Crude Death Rate (2009-10)
7.4 deaths /1000 population</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Name of the Constitution and the Year in which it was Adopted
Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan adopted in 1973
Previous Constitutions
1956 & 1962</td><td colspan="2">Male/Female Sex Ratio (2009-10)
Sex ratio: at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female
Under 15 years: 1.06 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.09 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.92 male(s)/female
Total population: 1.07 male(s)/female</td><td>Country under Military Rule
1958-1968 = 10 Years
1977-1988 = 11 Years
1998-2007 = 9 Years</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Literacy Rate in Pakistan (2009-10)
Total=57%
Male=69%
Female=45%</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Population Distribution (2009)
Urban population =32 %
Rural population=68%</td><td>Gross Domestic Product (GDP) PPP (2010)
Total US$ 202.831 billion
Per capita $1051</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Year Women received right to vote
1956</td><td>GNI
US$369.7 billion PPP in 2010</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan at http://elections.com.pk/contents.php?i=9 , Government of Pakistan at http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/, Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan http://www.mowd.gov.pk/ , Planning and Development Division, Government of Pakistan at http://www.pc.gov.pk/ , Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan at http://www.finance.gov.pk/ , Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education, Government of Pakistan at http://www.moswse.gov.pk/ , Statistics Division Government of Pakistan at http://www.statpak.gov.pk/, http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/eco_gro_nat_inc_percap-gross-national-income-per-capita

Appendix 2: Socio-Economic Features of Bangladesh

Life Expectancy at Birth (2004) 61.3 years **Male** 61. 5 years **Female** 61.2 years	**Population Density (2004)** 979 persons /km^2	**Population Growth Rate (2004-05)** 1.39%	**Fertility Rate (2004-05)** 2.3 children born per woman	**Crude Birth Rate (2004-05)** 24.68 births/1000 population **Crude Death Rate** (2004-05 8 deaths /1000 population
Name of the Constitution and the Year in which it was Adopted Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, adopted in 1972	**Male/Female Sex Ratio (2006-07)** **Sex ratio: at birth:** 1.04 male(s)/female **Under 15 years:** 1.01 male(s)/female **15-64 years Old** 0.9 male(s)/female **65 years and over** 0.94 male(s)/female **Total population** 1.07 male(s)/female			**Population Distribution (2007)** **Urban Population =32.2% Rural Population=67.8%**
Literacy Rate in Bangladesh (2004-05) Total=51.6% Male=57.2% Female=42.8%				**Gross Domestic Product (GDP) PPP (2010)** Total US$258.608 billion Per capita $1572
Year Women Received Right to vote 1972				**Gross National Income (GNI) (2010)** U.S$267.18 billion PPP in 2010

Source:http://www.parliament.gov.bd/,,http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh,

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jatiyo_Sangshad,http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh,

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